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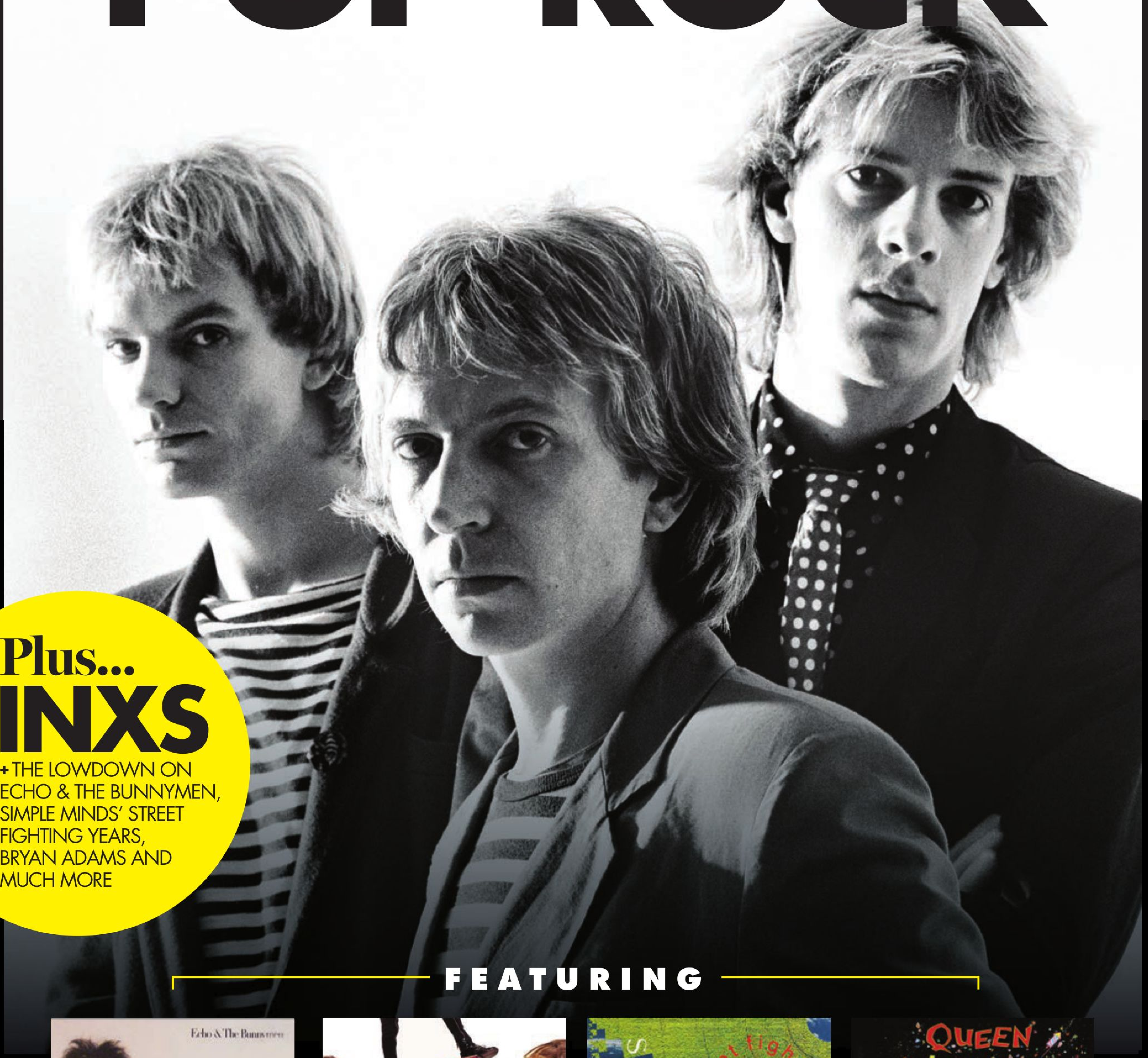
POP-ROCK



Plus...

INXS

+ THE LOWDOWN ON ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN, SIMPLE MINDS' STREET FIGHTING YEARS, BRYAN ADAMS AND MUCH MORE

FEATURING

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS + QUEEN COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

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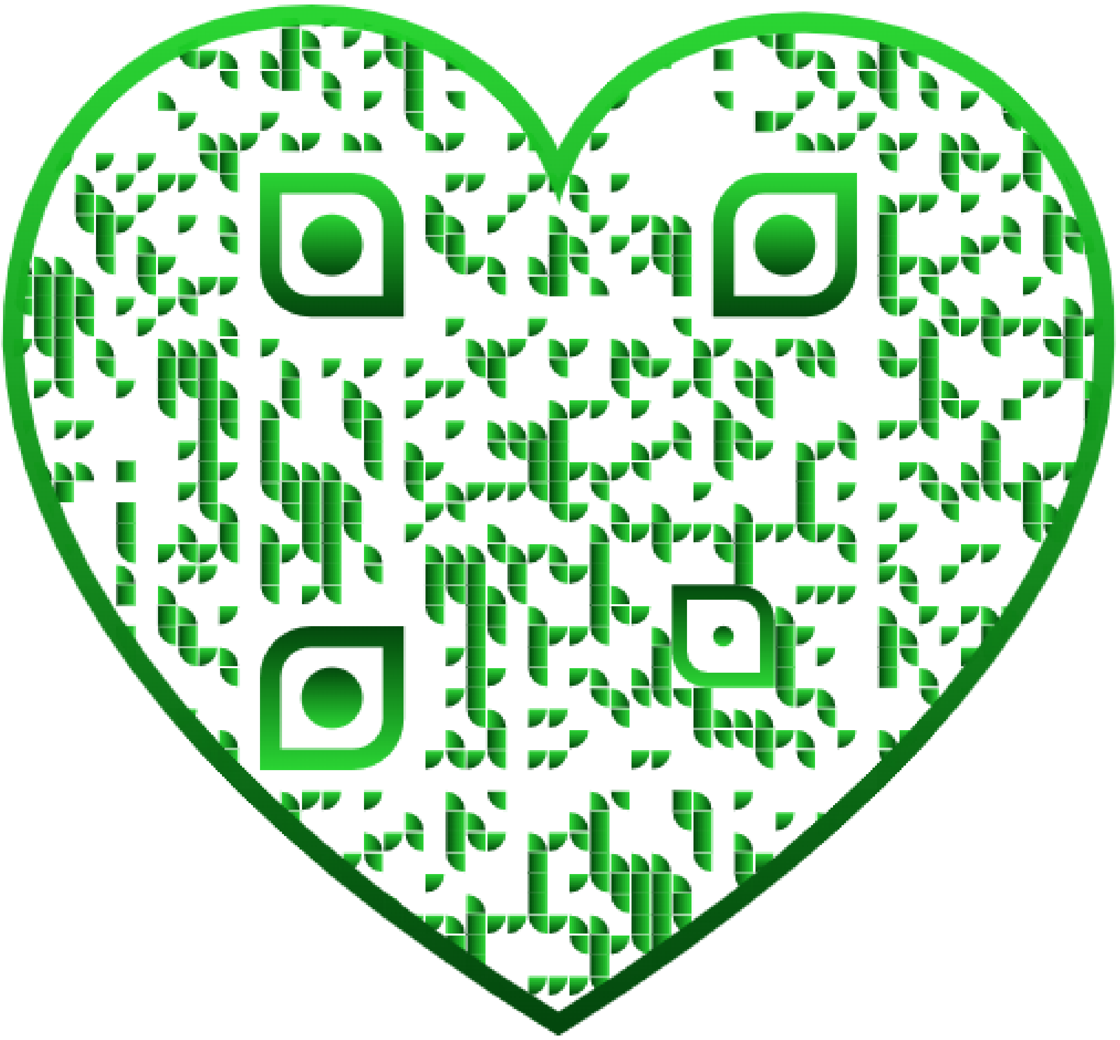

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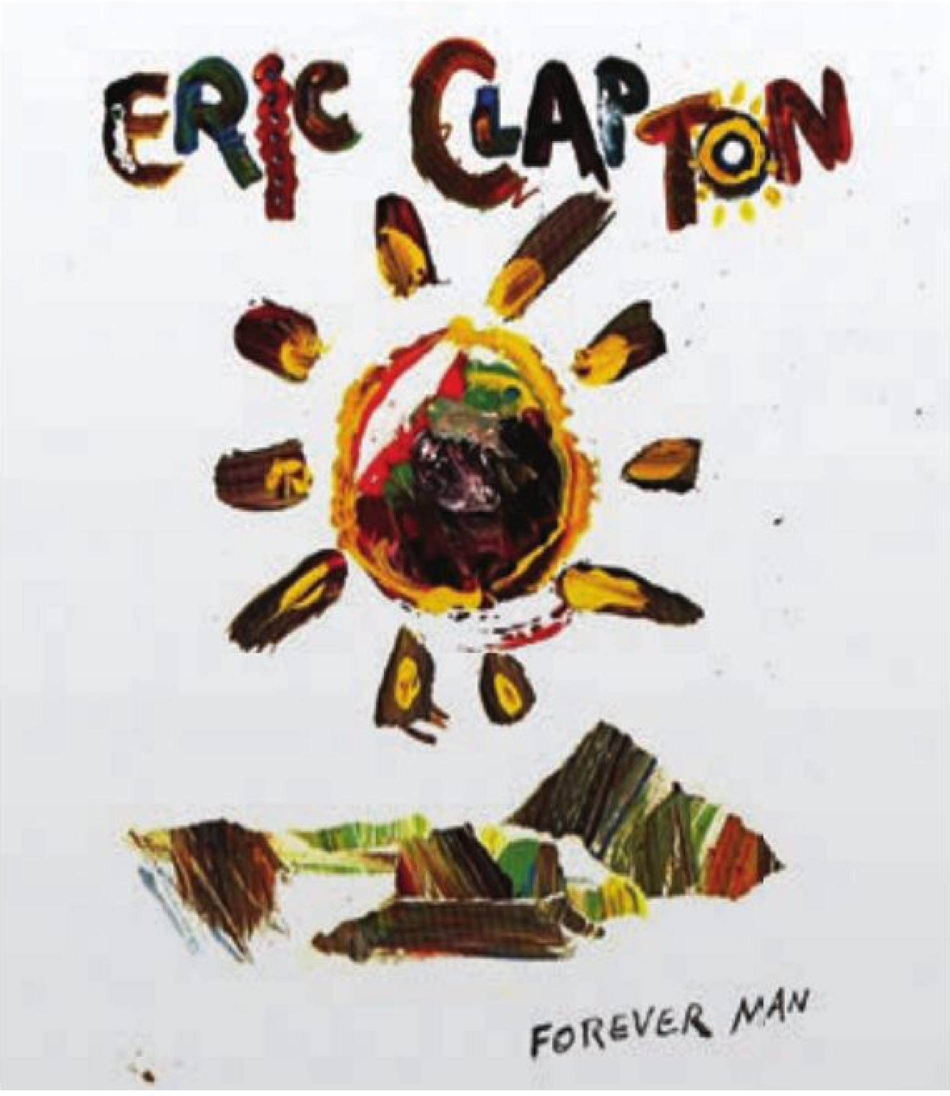

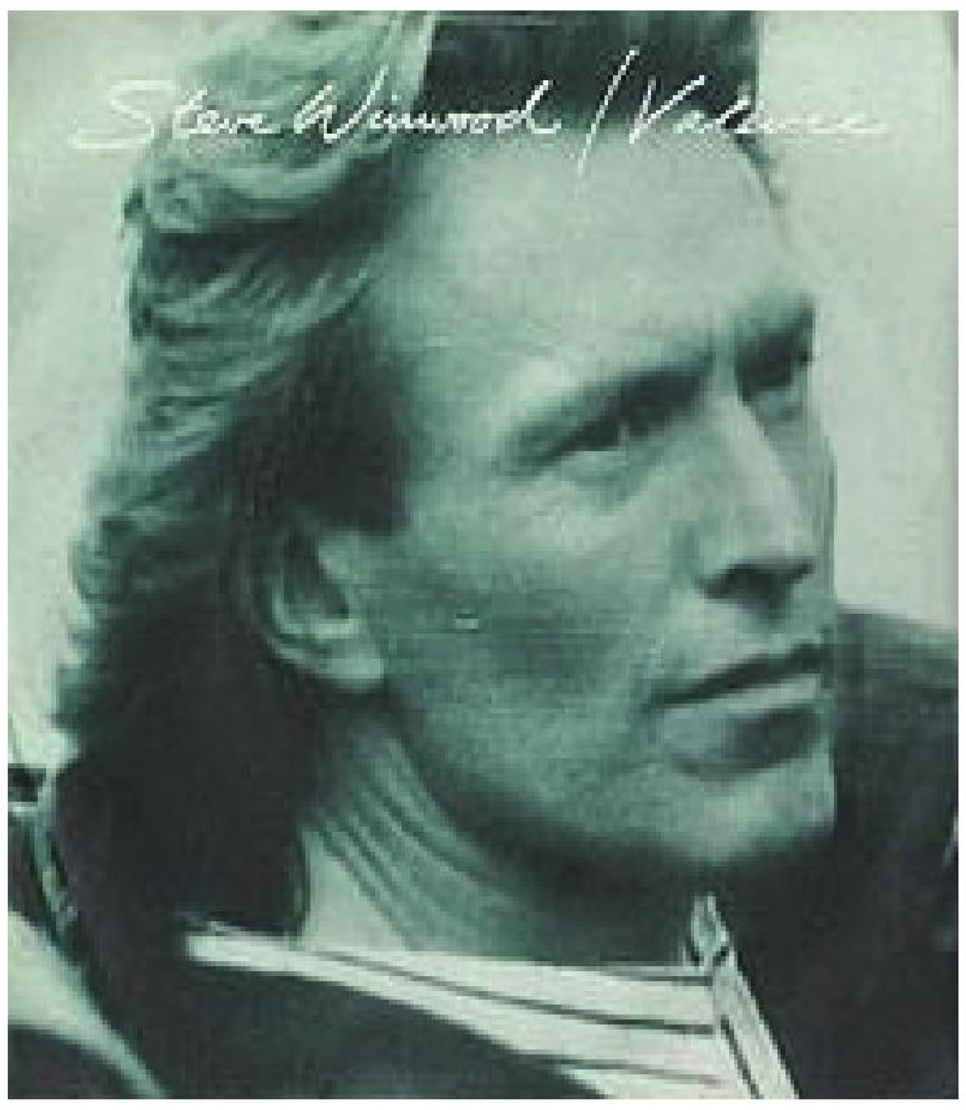

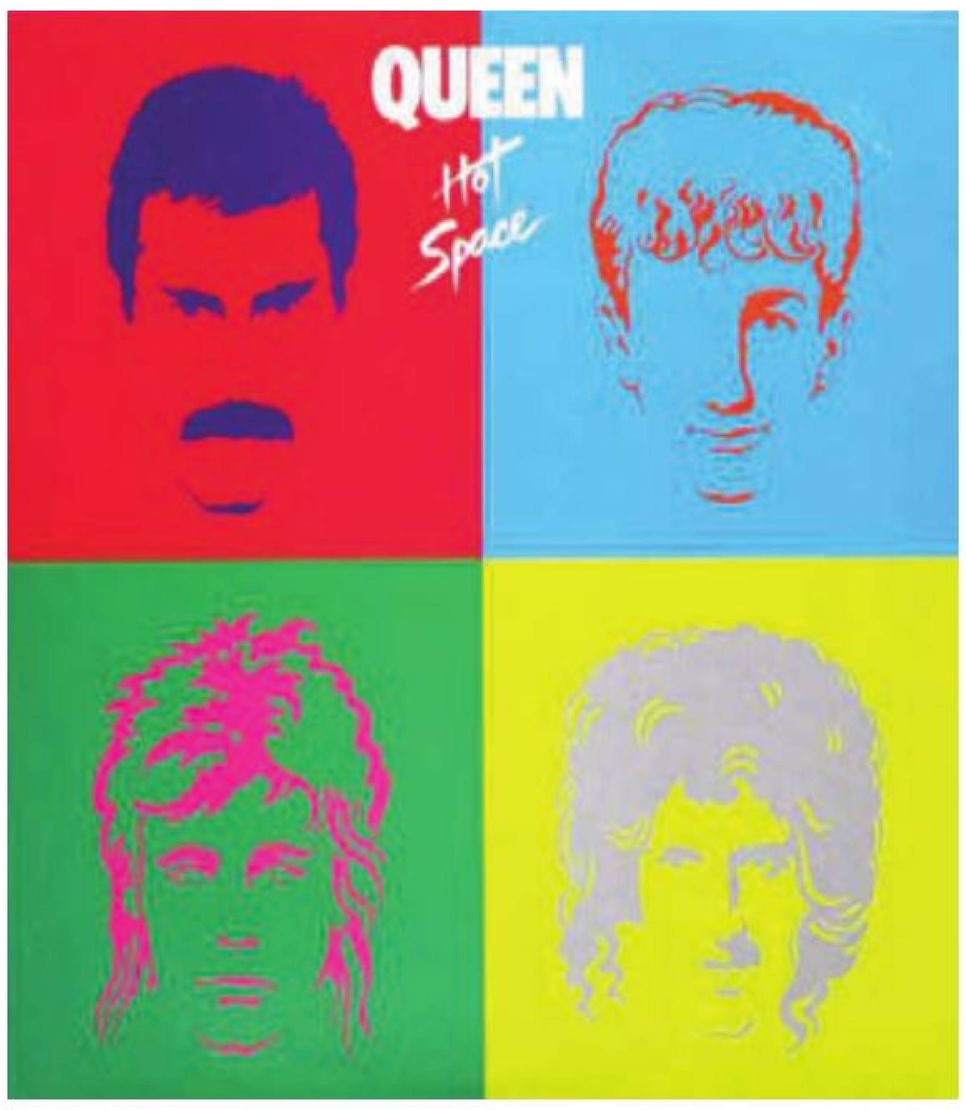

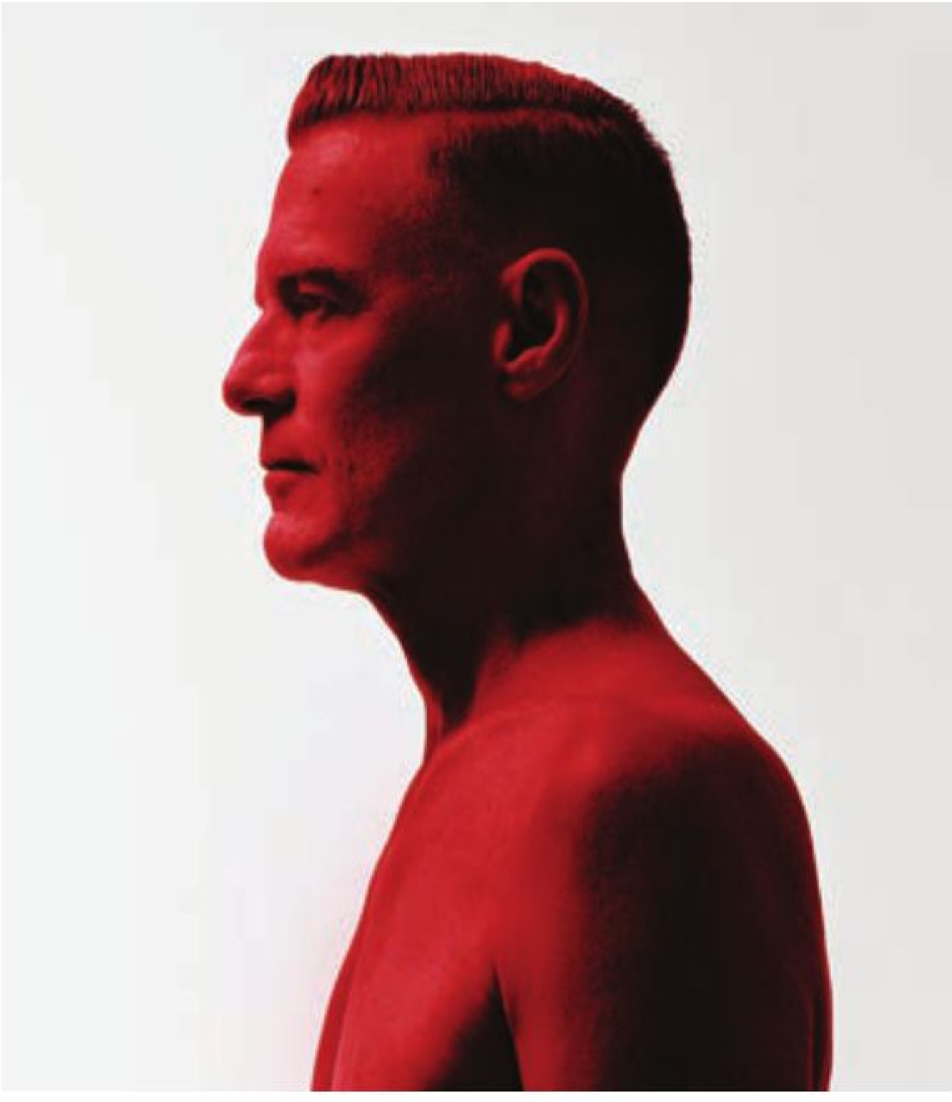

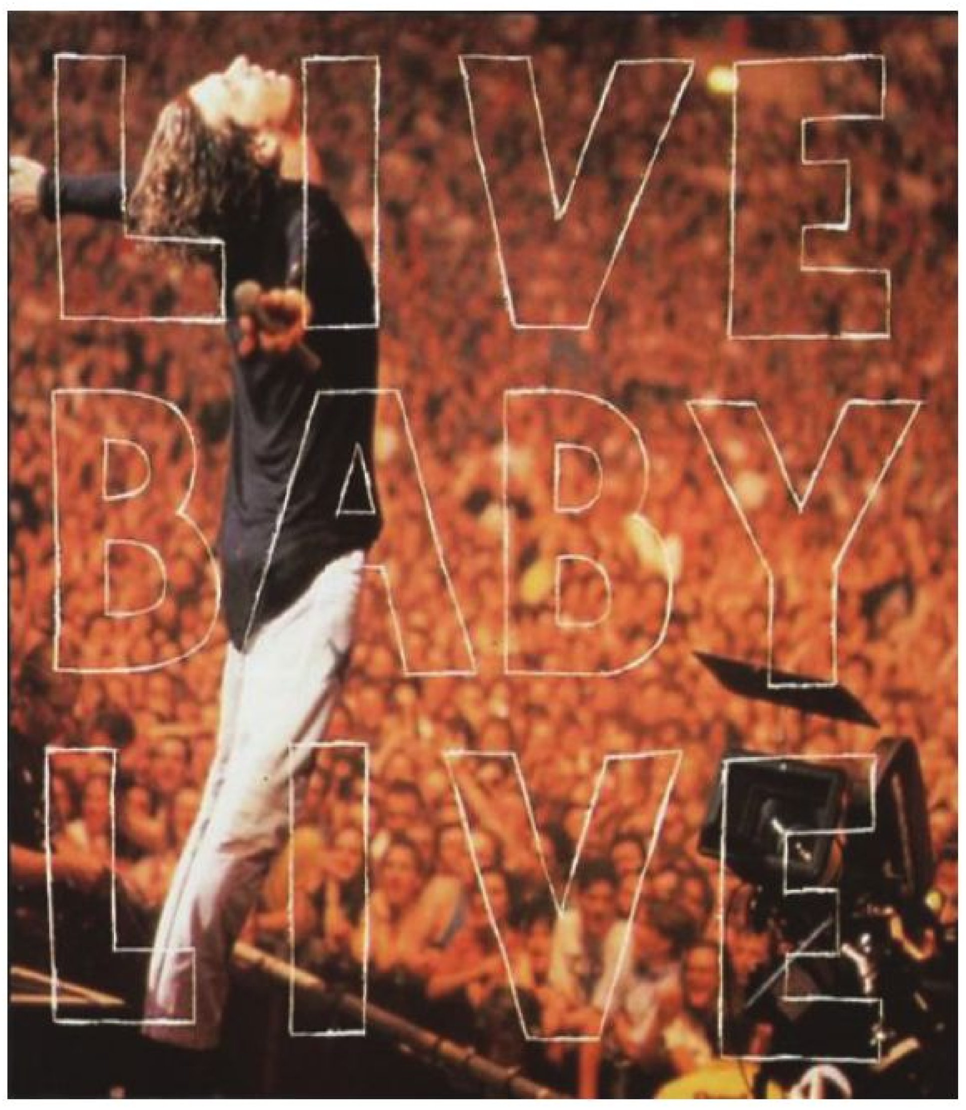

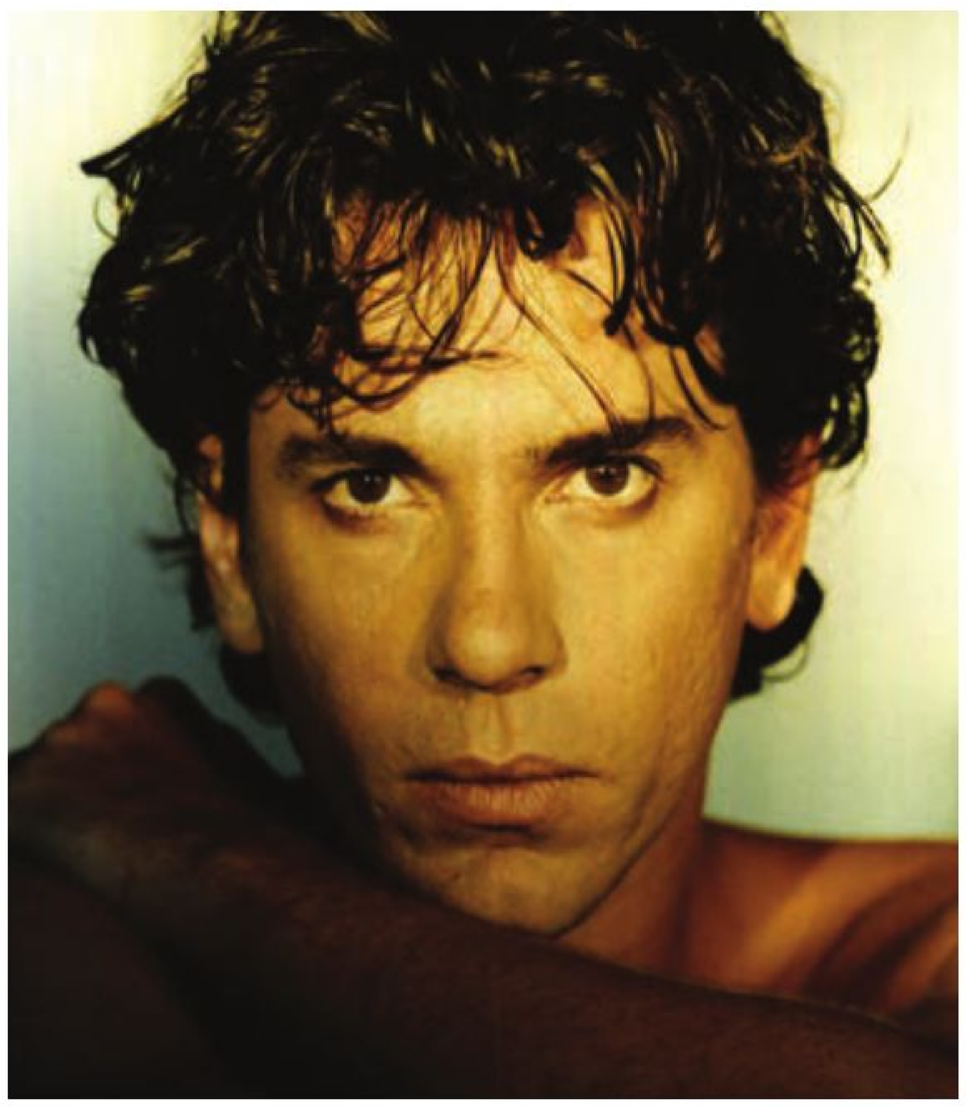

Welcome...

Melding hooky guitar riffs with pristine pop melodies has been the preserve of only a handful premier league artists and bands over the years. But those who have pulled off that tricky balancing act have risen through the ranks to become some of the music world's biggest stars.

The global success of Queen now includes a Oscar-winning Hollywood biopic and INXS have also recently hit the big screen with the critically-acclaimed biopic of their frontman Michael Hutchence, *Mystify*. Meanwhile, Bryan Adams' *(Everything I Do) I Do It For You* remains the longest consecutive No.1 single in UK chart history.

Here then is our snapshot of some of our favourite artists who put a dash of rock into their assault on the charts.

Steve

Steve Harnell, Editor
Follow me on Twitter: @steve_harnell

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COMING AROUND AGAIN

PROVING THAT FORM IS TEMPORARY YET CLASS IS PERMANENT, A WHOLE HOST OF MAJOR 60s ACTS HAD AN UNEXPECTED CAREER RESURGENCE AS BONA FIDE CHART STARS IN THE 80s

DOUGLAS MCPHERSON

How funny that music can fall so neatly into decades. The 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s each had their own signature sounds, fashions and defining mood. Very few artists who made their name in one era ever enjoyed hits in another. The simple reason is that the young fans who made them stars grow up and stop buying records, while the next generation of teens rarely want to listen to the music that their parents like.

However, while pop fame often comes with a use-by date, there have been some honourable exceptions. The 80s saw several long-established – and even long-forgotten – singers not only enjoy huge comebacks but, in some cases, produce classic cuts that completely eclipsed the past hits that had once defined them.

TOTALLY WIRED

One of the first established artists to embrace the new sounds of the 80s was Cliff Richard, with *Wired For Sound*. That he was among the frontrunners leading the charge into synth-pop wasn't surprising, since he'd been regularly reinventing himself since his emergence as an Elvis-styled rock'n'roller with the seminal British rock single *Move It* in 1958.

In 1979, Richard had scored his biggest hit for a decade with the disco-infused ballad *We Don't Talk Anymore*. The international chart-topper was written by Alan Tarney, who also played keyboards on the track, so it was only natural that he'd be asked to write and produce a whole album for Cliff. The result was 1981's *Wired For Sound*, whose synth-pop title track returned Cliff to the Top Five.

Richard also anticipated the influence of MTV, which launched that year, promoting *Wired For Sound* with a promo in which he rollerskated around the modernistic concrete environs of Milton Keynes wearing the then-new icon of the age, a Sony Walkman.

SIMPLY THE BEST

Cliff scored big but Tina Turner's return to the top of the charts was one of the most impressive comebacks of all time. Born in Nutbush, Tennessee, which she would later immortalise in the 1973 hit *Nutbush City Limits*, the former Anna Mae Bullock came to fame in the Ike and Tina Turner Review, where the duo scored with such abrasive r'n'b shouters as *River Deep – Mountain High* in 1966. The aggression in their songs doubtless came in part from their stormy marriage and when their harrowing union dissolved, a few years after the hits dried up, it looked like her career would be reduced to reliving past glories on the cabaret circuit.

However, a talent as volcanic as Turner's would not quietly fade away, as searing live performances alongside The Rolling Stones and Chuck Berry proved. Then, in 1982, she was one of several singers invited to perform on the synth-driven covers album *Music Of Quality And Distinction Volume One* by the British Electric Foundation, helmed by keyboard players Martyn Ware and Ian Craig Marsh, both founder members of Human League and Heaven 17.

Turner's update of *Ball Of Confusion* convinced Capitol A&R man John Carter that Tina had the potential to make contemporary hits. Re-teamed with the production team of Ware and Marsh, the resulting single, an impassioned cover of Al Green's *Let's Stay Together,* became her first solo UK Top 10 single.

The album *Private Dancer* followed, uniting Turner with various producers at studios in the UK. It was a multimillion-seller and also won four Grammy awards. Highlights included the brooding single *Private Dancer,* penned by Mark Knopfler, and the similarly bitter-hearted *What's Love Got To Do With It,* which topped the American chart and became Turner's biggest-ever hit. Bucks Fizz must have been irked since they'd recorded *What's Love...* before Turner and shelved their version when hers came out first. Before that, Cliff Richard had turned it down although, ultimately, no one could have owned it like Tina.

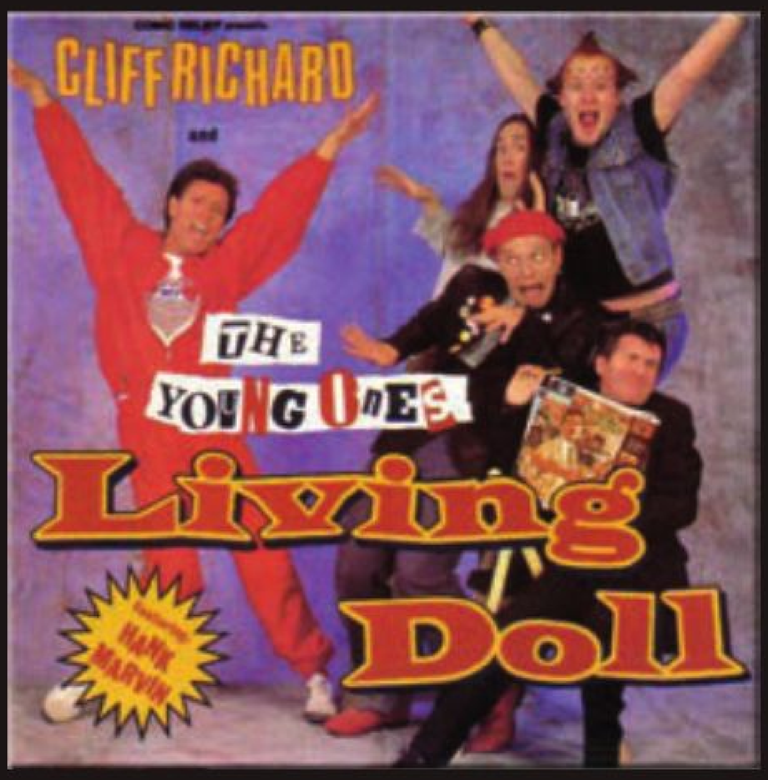
Turner's new-found fame was cemented when she starred alongside Mel Gibson in the 1985 film *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, and released another hit, *We Don't Need Another Hero*, from the soundtrack. Before the decade was out, she made *Foreign Affair*, which included her signature song, *(Simply) The Best.*

A PROG REBIRTH

Genesis had one of pop's biggest makeovers when they went from being a wilfully un-radio-friendly, albums-oriented prog rock band in the 70s to one of the biggest stadium acts of the 80s, courtesy of such

BACK TO THE TOP!

THE NUMBER ONES



LIVING DOLL

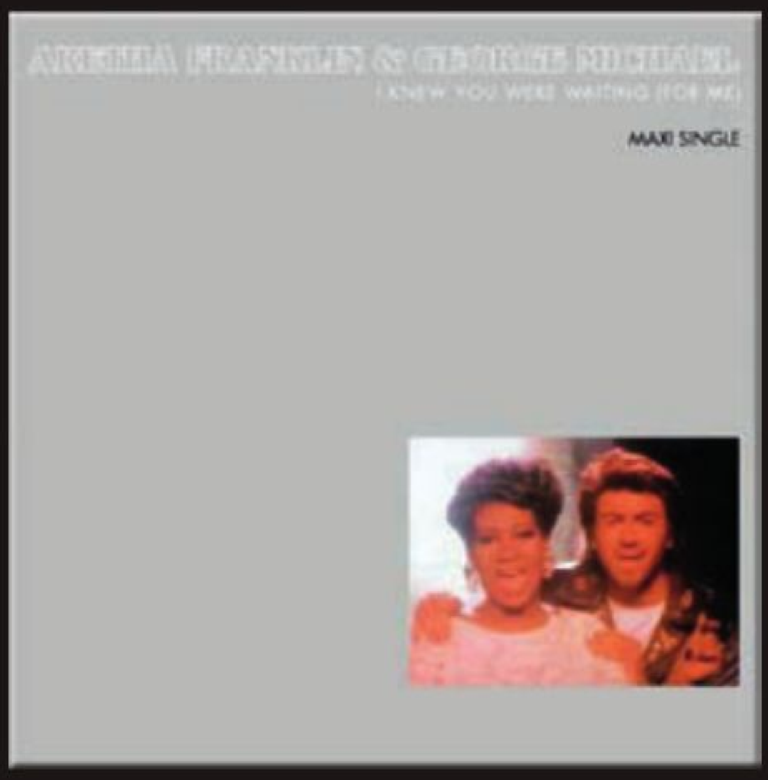
CLIFF RICHARD AND
THE YOUNG ONES

Penned by Lionel Bart who wrote the musical *Oliver!*, *Living Doll* was Cliff's first No.1 in 1959. It also took him back to the top spot in 1986, when he teamed up with The Young Ones – Rik Mayall, Ade Edmondson, Nigel Planer and Christopher Ryan – for Comic Relief.

EBONY AND IVORY

PAUL McCARTNEY
AND STEVIE WONDER

The best ideas are often the simplest, so using black and white piano keys as a lilting metaphor for racial integration gave McCartney his longest-running post-Beatles chart-topper, and Wonder his longest-running No.1 ever (six weeks in the US) in 1982.



I KNEW YOU WERE WAITING (FOR ME)

ARETHA FRANKLIN
AND GEORGE MICHAEL

Despite being well-remembered for the evergreen *Respect* and *I Say A Little Prayer* (1967 and 1968), the soul legend had a surprisingly low-charting career in the UK until she teamed with her biggest fan, George Michael, for her first British No.1 in 1987.

sublimely catchy charts hits as *Turn It On Again*, *Mama* and *Invisible Touch*.

The band's new commercial sensibility can largely be attributed to Phil Collins, whose solo career was simultaneously on fire throughout the decade, thanks to monster hits including *In The Air Tonight*, *You Can't Hurry Love* and *Sussudio*.

Collins also helped to revalue the stock of veteran guitar hero Eric Clapton when he produced and played drums on Clapton's 1985 album *Behind The Sun*. During the 70s, Clapton had given the world such indelible recordings as *I Shot The Sheriff*, *Layla* (with Derek and the Dominos) and *Wonderful Tonight*. He'd simultaneously spent the decade trying to destroy himself with drugs and booze, so a new synth-enhanced sound and fresh Armani-clad image suited his newly cleaned-up personal life.

Yet Warner Brothers didn't feel Collins had gone far enough in rebranding Clapton for the 80s, so before they released *Behind The Sun*, they asked Slowhand to add some more chart-oriented material, to be produced in Los Angeles. The resulting single, *Forever Man*, found Clapton's guitar smoking as hotly as ever with a polished MTV-worthy track. Clapton then cemented his return with an appearance at Live Aid and was soon back in the studio with Collins for the album *August*.

Thanks largely to *It's In The Way That You Use It*, composed for the Tom Cruise and Paul Newman film *The Color of Money*, the album hit No.3 in the UK and became Clapton's biggest seller to date. At the 1987 Brit Awards, he picked up the honour for Outstanding Contribution to Music.

WHILE YOU SEE A CHANCE

In the late 60s, Steve Winwood worked with Clapton (and Cream's drummer Ginger Baker) in Blind Faith. He was also the vocalist in short-lived supergroup, Eric Clapton and the Powerhouse, alongside Cream's Jack Bruce and Paul Jones from Manfred Mann. Before that, Winwood had risen to fame as the powerful 16-year-old vocalist of the Spencer Davis Group with *Keep On Running*, in 1965, and with Traffic's psychedelic hits *Paper Sun* and *Hole In My Shoe*.

By the late 1970s, however, he was struggling to find relevance in the face of punk, and his self-titled 1977 solo album was coolly received by the critics. His response was to hole up in his home-built studio in the countryside and spend two years crafting an album on which he played all the instruments. The resulting *Arc Of A Diver* included hints of his psychedelic past on *Spanish Dancer*, but also a fresh new synth sound on the lead single *While You See A Chance*.

Having begun his career so young, Winwood was still a fresh-faced 32-year-old with a sharp look that perfectly suited the new wave of cool British synth bands invading America on MTV. The single hit No.7 on the American chart, the album sold three million copies. The synth sound continued with the UK Top 20 hit *Valerie*, from follow-up album

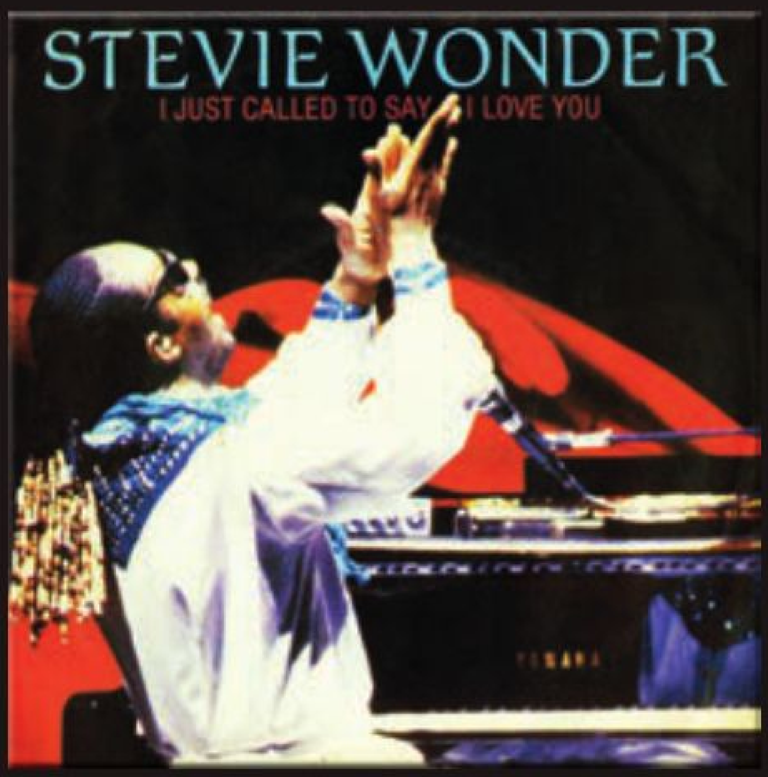
"ELO'S MISSION STATEMENT WAS TO 'PICK UP WHERE THE BEATLES LEFT OFF'"

HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER
THE HOLLIES

The 80s resulted in many memorable TV ads and one such, for Miller Lite beer, revived the Hollies' No.3 hit from 1969 and propelled a reissue in 1988. Since they were one of the few major 60s pop groups that had never broken up, they could capitalise on this career boost.

CHAIN REACTION
DIANA ROSS

As part of the Supremes, Diana Ross first topped the UK chart with *Baby Love* in 1964. Written by the Bee Gees, this subtle 80s update of the classic Motown sound took her back to the top aided by a video that nostalgically nodded to the black and white TV music shows of the 60s.



I JUST CALLED TO SAY I LOVE YOU
STEVIE WONDER

The Motown legend found a new generation of pop fans when he played every instrument on this endlessly uplifting ballad that topped a record 19 charts around the world and clocked up sales of more than four million on its way to becoming his most successful single.

RELIGHT MY FIRE
TAKE THAT FEATURING LULU

Amazingly, this irrepressible disco homage was Lulu's first No.1, marking an at the time record journey of 29 years from her chart debut with *Shout*, in 1964, to her arrival on the top spot with the ultimate boy band in 1993. She'd previously taken *Shout* back to the Top 10, under her own steam, in 1986.

Talking Back To The Night. Having won two Grammys for the US chart-topping, *Higher Love*, Winwood ended the decade with another US No.1, the soul and r'n'b flavoured *Roll With It*.

© Paul Natkin/WireImage/Getty

Eric Clapton reasserted himself as rock royalty with an appearance at the US Live Aid concert in July 1985

PERFECT HARMONY
Neither Paul McCartney nor Stevie Wonder can be said to have made a comeback in the 80s since they never stopped releasing hits, but when the former Beatle and Motown star teamed up for the sugary ballad *Ebony And Ivory* in 1982, they enjoyed one of their biggest-ever successes. This plea for racial harmony staked out the top of the American chart for no less than seven weeks – the longest run at the top in McCartney's post-Beatles career, and Wonder's longest ever – as well as being No.1 in most other countries, too.

When the Fab Four broke up in 1970, McCartney could easily have rested on his laurels. Instead, he notched up hits throughout the 70s with his new band Wings, including the Bond theme *Live And Let Die* and the stirring bagpipes-fuelled No.1 *Mull Of Kintyre*.

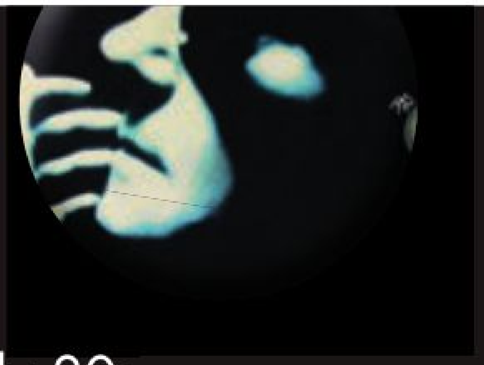
He began the 80s hooking up with Michael Jackson for the hit duets *Say Say Say* and *The Girl Is Mine*, the latter being the first single from Jackson's era-defining *Thriller*. Later in the 80s, Macca returned to the top spot with *Pipes Of Peace*, and came close to it with *We All Stand Together* from the animated movie *Rupert and the Frog Song*, that he also wrote and produced.

Stevie Wonder, meanwhile, had been making music since he recorded a Ray Charles tribute album in 1961, when he was 11 years old. His hits throughout the 60s and 70s included the timeless *For Once In My Life* and *He's Misstra Know It All*.

It was during the 80s, however, that he achieved his biggest commercial success, beginning with the signature hits *Happy Birthday* and *Master Blaster (Jammin')*. In 1984, Wonder released his biggest ever smash, *I Just Called To Say I Love You*, which topped no less than 19 charts around the world. Not only did he write and produce the perfect piece of pop balladry, he also played every instrument.

LET THERE BE LIGHT
Formed in the year that the Fab Four split, the Electric Light Orchestra's mission statement was "to pick up where the Beatles left off." The Birmingham-based symphonic rockers then out-Beatled the Beatles with 70s hits like *The Diary Of Horace Wimp* and *Mr Blue Sky*. The latter was an orchestral and choral tour de force but, like *Good Vibrations* by The Beach Boys, wore its pomp, complexity and sonic trickery

Steve Winwood's *Valerie* was one of many songs that showed the value of being not just radio-friendly but also MTV-friendly



Ray Davies conjured up an unlikely hit for The Kinks in 1982 with their nostalgic single *Come Dancing*

© Michael Putland/Getty Images

Dusty Springfield with Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe, pose on the set of the video for *Nothing Has Been Proved*

© Michael Putland/Getty Images

A Top 10 hit in many countries, ELO's *Hold On Tight* mixed its rock 'n' roll influences with a verse in French

The hit single *Got My Mind Set On You* came from George Harrison's 11th album, *Cloud Nine*

so lightly over a beguilingly catchy melody that it became a perfect piece of pop. In 1981, ELO swapped string arrangements for electronica on the concept album *Time,* which loosely told the story of a man transported from the 80s to 2095.

The group had always harboured a fondness for back-to-basics 1950s rock'n'roll, however, as evidenced by their hit 1973 cover of Chuck Berry's *Roll Over Beethoven*, which rocked no less for being mashed up with Beethoven's *Symphony No.5*. That nostalgic element to ELO's style made them perfectly placed to join the early 80s rockabilly revival and, untypical of *Time's* generally futuristic sounds, the biggest hit from the disc was *Hold On Tight,* an homage to the 50s distinguished by a Jerry Lee Lewis-style piano riff and Jerry Lee-style vocal inflections by Jeff Lynne.

At a time when Radio One was playing as many rock'n'roll records as New Romantic songs, *Hold On Tight* rode the retro zeitgeist all the way to No.3, while bringing a few modern pop touches to the party, such as a synthesised drum sound and a verse sung in French. The song's video recreated scenes from camp sci-fi and horror movies in glorious black and white and, with a budget of £40,000, was the most expensive promo clip made at that time.

A couple of years later, ELO mined the vein of 50s nostalgia still further with *Rock 'N' Roll Is King*. Teddy boys may have found the track kitsch but we suspect most of them enjoyed the "ram-alam-alama" nostalgia fest as much as the wider pop audience, who took it to No.13.

HAVE HITS, WILL TRAVEL

In the second half of the 80s, Jeff Lynne became part of a major comeback when he teamed up with George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison and Tom Petty to form supergroup The Traveling Wilburys. Although their first and biggest single, *Handle With Care,* failed to crack the UK Top 20, it reached No.2 on America's Mainstream Rock Chart and both of the group's albums, *Traveling Wilburys Vol 1* and *Vol 3* (there never was a *Vol 2)* were critical and commercial successes.

Although Harrison had been a reclusive figure for most of the 80s (the murder of John Lennon had left him wary of a similar attack) he returned to the limelight in 1987 with the album *Cloud Nine* and one of his biggest hit singles, *Got My Mind Set On You,* which topped the US chart and made No.2 in the UK.

The hit cover was produced by Lynne and the idea for The Traveling Wilburys came to them during this collaboration. The name came from a comment-cum-catchphrase by Harrison, when he jokingly said of some recording errors, "We'll bury them in the mix."

Lynne also produced what would prove to be Roy Orbison's final album, *Mystery Girl*. When he succumbed to an untimely death aged just 52 on 6 December 1988, Orbison was enjoying a huge resurgence of popularity, not least because *In Dreams* had featured in David Lynch's 1986 film *Blue Velvet.*

The posthumously released single, *You Got It* – written by Lynne, Orbison and Petty – became Orbison's first international smash for a quarter of a century and managed to effortlessly repackage his tough but lonesome sound for a new generation of fans. His haunting version of *I Drove All Night,* recorded before Cyndi Lauper's rendition but released after it, gave him one last Top 10 hit in 1992.

DANCING SHOES

North London band The Kinks burst onto the swinging 60s scene with such hard-riffing mod rockers as *You Really Got Me* and *All Day And All Of The Night.* Like

"THEY CALL US AVANT-GARDE, WHICH IS TRUE BECAUSE WE AVANT GARDE THE FAINTEST IDEA OF WHAT WE'RE DOING" DUANE EDDY

most British bands of the time, they adapted their guitar licks from the American blues, but also drew from the English music hall when it came to writing slyly subversive and comic social comment. The camped-up 1966 hit *Dedicated Follower Of Fashion* was a prime example, while the cheekily provocative *Lola* – probably the first hit to slip transsexuality under the BBC airplay radar – was another.

In the 80s, a new generation of London-based bands such as Madness, Squeeze and Chas & Dave hit the charts with a similar brand of Cockney-flavoured half-comic, half-observational songs such as *Baggy Trousers, Cool For Cats* and *Gertcha*. So it was only appropriate that The Kinks should return to pop prominence with their nostalgic tale of British working class life, *Come Dancing*.

Surprisingly for such an English lyric, the brass-powered single failed to chart in the UK on its initial 1982 release. It first took off in America, where it tied with *Tired of Waiting For You,* as the band's biggest-ever success in that country. This US success led to its re-release in the UK, where it finally became a deserved hit, appealing to both young pop buyers and the parents and grandparents who were old enough to remember the long-demolished dance halls that the song eulogised.

GET READY, EDDY

If some stars were born in the 80s and some made the 80s their own, then a couple undoubtedly had the 80s thrust upon them. Among them was twangy guitar legend Duane Eddy, who was conscripted by the Art of Noise to reboot his echoing 1959 hit *Peter Gunn Theme* as a Top 10 dance smash in 1986.

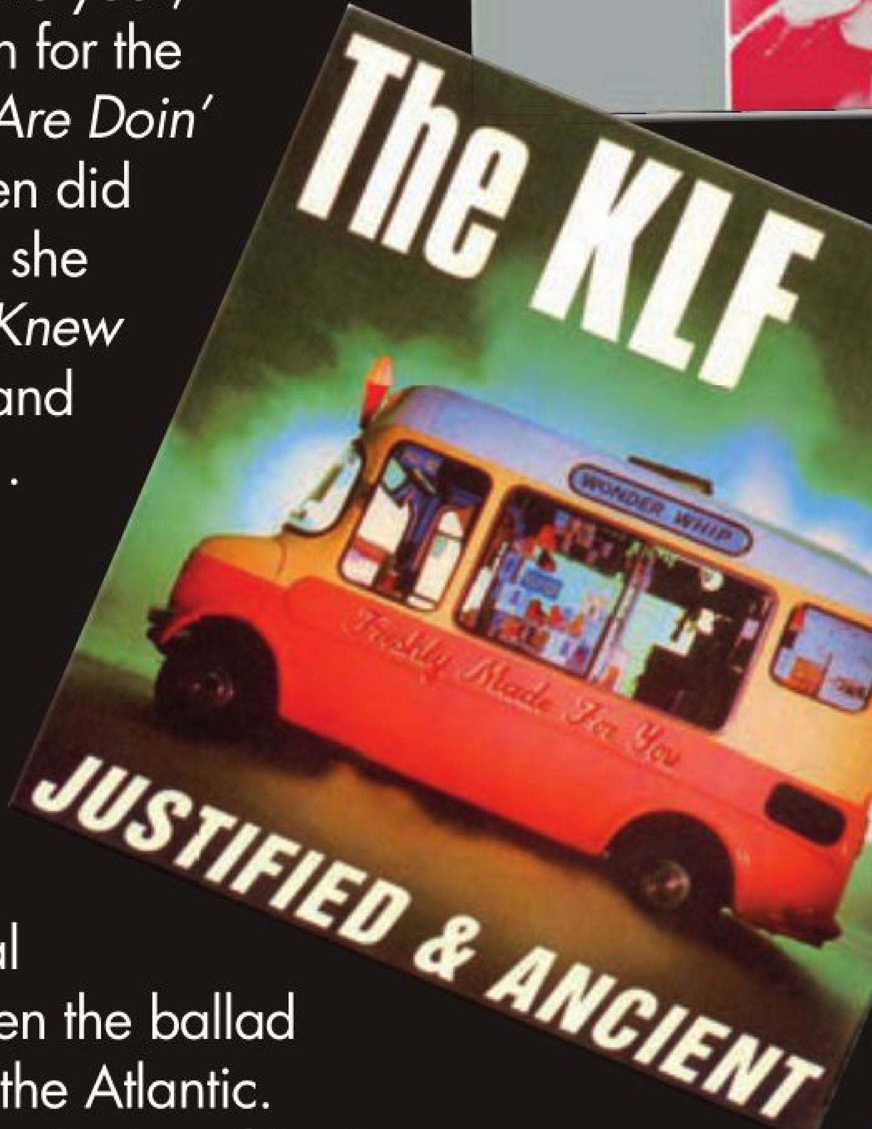
A bucket-load of accompanying sound effects took none of the menace away from Eddy's central performance of the rumbling one-chord top line, while the laconic, Stetson-clad 48-year-old survived appearing on *Top Of The Pops* with his brooding mystery intact.

"I think it's very clever what they did with it," said Eddy, who picked up a Grammy for Best Rock Instrumental Performance. He also looked back fondly on a conversation with the Noise's sampler JJ Jeczalik: "He said to me one day: 'They call us avant-garde, which is true because we avant garde the faintest idea of what we're doing.'"

The Beach Boys were given a less prominent role when they sang back-up vocals with Brooklyn hip-hop trio The Fat Boys on a rap version of former surf instrumental *Wipe Out*. However, they looked like they enjoyed themselves in the goofy Monkees'-style video, the novelty hit took them to No.2 in 1987 and, for a while, the 80s hit parade started to look like an endless 'Bring A Legend To Work' day.

The Smiths started it when they persuaded 1967 Eurovision winner Sandie Shaw to cover their then recent debut hit, *Hand In Glove,* in 1984. The *Puppet On A String* singer threw herself into the challenge, rolling around on the floor and singing "the sun shines out of our behinds" while backed by The Smiths on *Top Of The Pops*.

Eurythmics recruited Stevie Wonder to blast his harmonica all over their summer-defining 1985 chart-topper *There Must Be An Angel (Playing With My Heart)*. Later the same year, they called on Aretha Franklin for the Top 10 collaboration *Sisters Are Doin' It For Themselves*. Franklin then did even better (for herself) when she joined George Michael on *I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)* and scored her first ever UK No.1.



Not to be outdone, the Pet Shop Boys recorded *What Have I Done To Deserve This?* with Dusty Springfield and gave her the biggest hit of her career, as well as her first real smash since the late 60s, when the ballad got to No.2 on both sides of the Atlantic.

To capitalise on Dusty's refreshed profile, the Pet Shop Boys wrote and produced her extremely 80s-sounding recording of *Nothing Has Been Proved* for the soundtrack of *Scandal*, the 1989 film about the Profumo Affair, and the out-and-out dance track *In Private*, which established her as a club icon.

Country music queen Tammy Wynette was given an equally unlikely rebirth on the dancefloor when The KLF invited her to sing about Mu Mu Land and ice cream vans on *Justified & Ancient* in 1991. The song reached No.2, her highest UK chart position since *Stand By Your Man* topped the list in 1975, but she admitted she'd been "apprehensive" about teaming up with the anarchic dance music pranksters Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty who had regenerated into The Timelords for novelty hit, *Doctorin' The Tardis*.

"Mu Mu Land looks a lot more interesting place than Tennessee," Wynette mused at the time, "but I wouldn't want to live there."

Even a barrage of sound effects and musical stabs couldn't diminish the power of the riff in The Art of Noise's version of *The Peter Gunn Theme*

“WE WERE IN PARADISE, CREATING OUR OWN HELL”

STEWART COPELAND

© Getty Images

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

MAKING LIAM AND NOEL GALLAGHER LOOK LIKE THE CHUCKLE BROTHERS, THE POLICE WERE POP'S MOST FAMOUS BRAWLERS, SOMEHOW CREATING FIVE ICONIC ALBUMS DESPITE THE HATRED. THEY STILL LOATHED EACH OTHER WHILE EARNING MILLIONS ON THEIR 2000s REUNION TOUR. OR THAT'S THE MYTH. WHAT WAS LIFE REALLY LIKE AMONG THE WARFARE? STEWART COPELAND AND THE BAND'S PRODUCER HUGH PADGHAM RECALL CRISIS MEETINGS, UNLIKELY CLASSICS AND… JOGGING TRAMPOLINES? IT'S A STORY EVEN ODDER THAN THE LEGEND...

JOHN EARLS

When Sting and Shaggy played in Los Angeles recently on tour for their joint album *44/876*, sat in the front row together were Sting's old bandmates Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers. All three of The Police in the same venue: over a decade since their reunion tour, does this mean another comeback is on the way? Er, not quite... "We sat in the audience so that we could make snide comments, watching him from the front so he could see us," guffaws Stewart delightedly. "He's pretty fucking good on stage, old Stingo."

That year of reunion shows in 2007-08 was the third-highest earning tour of all-time, grossing £280 million. But it also saw one of music's most infamously brittle bands bitch and moan about each other pretty much from day one. Could they bear to do it again? "There's no reason why not," considers Stewart. "We all get along really well and we're all still in fine fettle. The songs are still really great! I'd be surprised if somebody doesn't have a bright idea for how to do it sometime in the future, but it's certainly not what anyone is thinking about now."

That's as close as Stewart Copeland ever gets to being diplomatic about The Police. After all: "We all get along really well?" What? Sting, Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers *get along*? The same Police who loathed each other so much that their final album *Synchronicity* is the accepted benchmark of making a classic despite eternal hatred? "Sure," insists Stewart. "Since we've been through the wars together and we don't have any reason to fight anymore, we get on great."

Stewart saw Andy the week before our interview in early November; Sting a couple of weeks before that. He delights in taking the piss out of Sting but, 40 years after losing the fight to be The Police's pre-eminent songwriter, Stewart has a great affection for "old Stingo", saying: "The English tabloid version of Sting? Sting is so far from that guy. As a rock star, Sting may appear a bit prim and earnest. But let it be known, Sting is not that guy."

Over the course of their nine-year recording life, The Police won six Grammy awards and two Brits

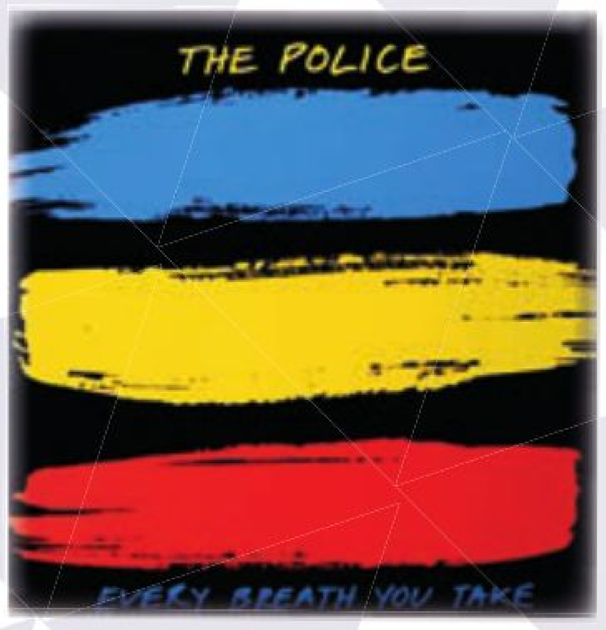
So everyone is all pals really. But Stewart is keenly aware that's not what people think of The Police. "The avatar of The Police is that we fought all the time, and I understand that, because it's an interesting story," Stewart accepts. "The truth is, we fought very little. There was a lot of tension in our last two albums, but we weren't fighting. Over dinner, we'd still shoot the shit and hang out. But in the studio, we were icily formal, mournful over the loss of our band's camaraderie. It wasn't open warfare, it was tension."

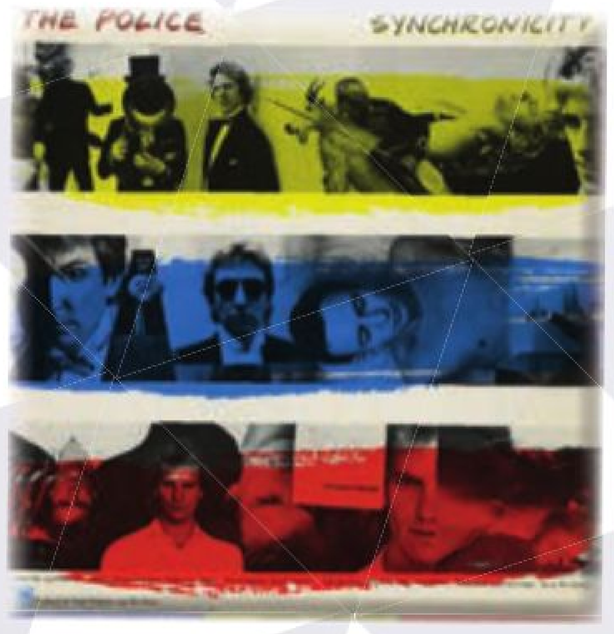
That tension was never more bitter than when recording *Every Breath You Take*. In May, it became the most-played song ever on US radio, overtaking The Righteous Brothers' *You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling*. It's been aired over 15 million times in the US alone, but nearly never got made at all. You could make a 10-part Netflix documentary about *Every Breath You Take*, from the moment Sting's demo was first played at Utopia Studios in Primrose Hill, North London, to the rest of the band, plus manager Miles Copeland and Hugh Padgham, The Police's producer since fourth album *Ghost In The Machine*. "We knew it was a hit as soon as we first heard Sting's platinum demo," raves Stewart. Hugh remembers being told by Miles at the playback: "There's a goddamn hit if I ever heard one! Don't fuck it up, Hugh!" The producer admits it would have been hard to fuck it up, noting: "I really think if my pet dog had produced *Every Breath You Take*, it would have been a hit."

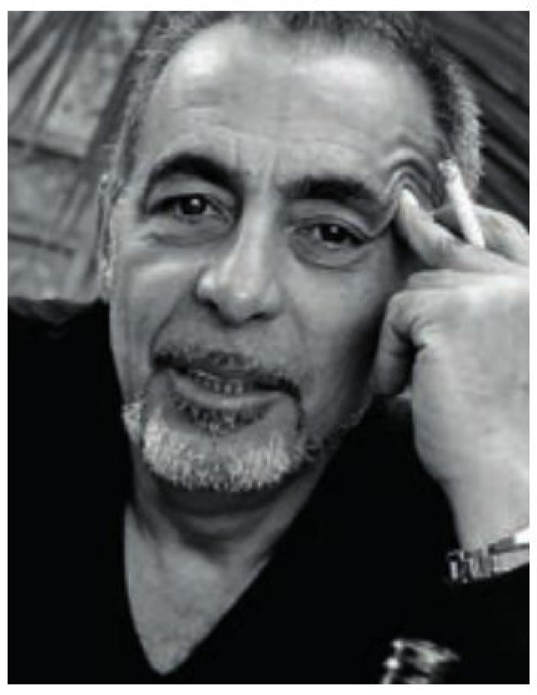
HE BANGS THE DRUMS

The problems over recording *Every Breath You Take* arose precisely because it was so simple. Hugh explains: "If Stewart couldn't be The Police's hit writer anymore, he wanted to show off his drumming skills. And he couldn't show off on *Every Breath You Take*." The secluded Le Studio in Quebec, where *Synchronicity* was mixed, was so remote the only distraction was to go skiing. Sting would go in the morning, leaving Stewart with Hugh. But in the afternoon, singer and drummer would swap mixing duties. Hugh recalls: "One morning, Stewart came in and said, 'I've got an idea. I want to overdub a hi-hat on *Every Breath You Take*.' We got the hi-hat out, it's played on the song, Stewart goes skiing at lunchtime and Sting comes in going, 'OK, what fucking rubbish did you do this morning?' Everything Sting said about Stewart had an 'F' in front of it. I played him the new mix of *Breath* with the hi-hat and Sting went, 'That's fucking *awful*, get rid of it.' I told him, 'If you don't like it, shouldn't you talk to Stewart about it?' The response came: 'No. It's my song. I hate it. Get rid of it. Now.' In those analogue days, if you got rid of something, it went to the great magnet in the sky. Sting stood over me, making sure I put the hi-hat track into the tape machine and wiped it. And of course, Stewart comes in the next day going, 'Where's my fucking hi-hat?'"

Hugh's sympathies mostly lay with Sting by the final stages of *Synchronicity*. "It wasn't that I wanted to take Sting's side over anyone else," emphasises Padgham. "I did it because I agreed with him. The problem with overdubbed hi-hats is that they often sound like overdubbed hi-hats, rather than anything necessary to







KING HENRY

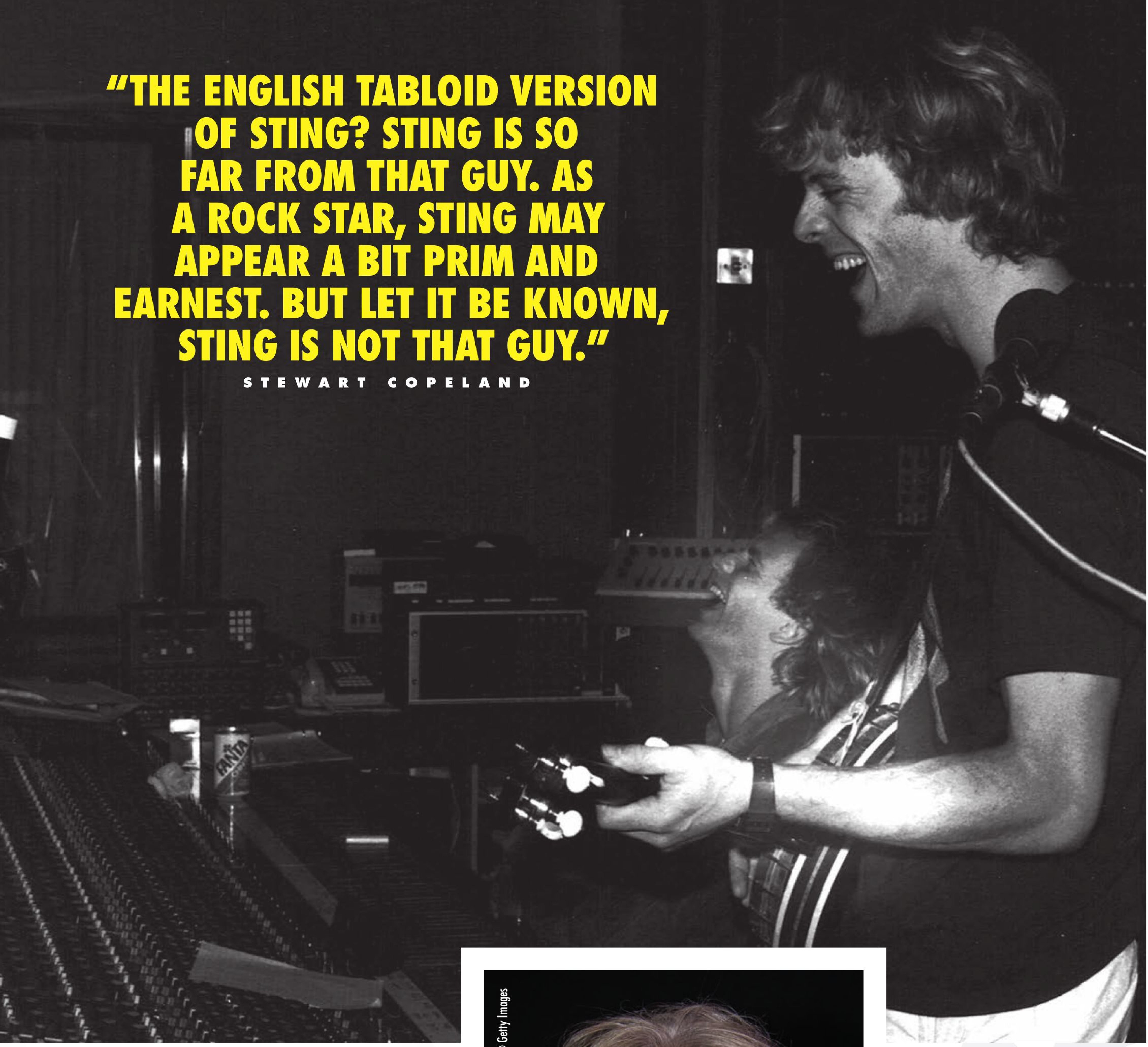
After he was ousted from The Police in 1977, guitarist Henry Padovani went on to have an exotic career. First joining influential punks Wayne County And The Electric Chairs, Henry soon formed The Flying Padovanis. He then became Vice President of The Police manager Miles Copeland's record label IRS. Henry also managed Italian soft-rocker Zucchero and was even a judge on the French version of *The X Factor*. Both Stewart and Sting guested on Henry's 2007 solo album *A Croire Que C'Était Pour La Vie*.

On The Police's reunion tour 12 years ago, Henry joined his old bandmates in the encore at Stade de France in Paris to play *Next To You*. "Playing with Henry again was one of the most emotional experiences of my entire life on stage," recalls Stewart Copeland. "Henry is a very colourful character, who we all love dearly. Henry has had an illustrious career in many fields, but none of that impressed his teenage daughter, who was with him at Stade de France. She just knew that dad had played with this old band in the 70s.

"Apparently, Henry's daughter went, 'Where's dad?' and looked up to see him on stage, where 80,000 French people have lit up like I've never heard *anything* before. That crowd was so excited to see one of their own up there – Henry is Corsican, really, but that French crowd were prepared to overlook that. It was so powerful to have everyone so happy."

"THE ENGLISH TABLOID VERSION OF STING? STING IS SO FAR FROM THAT GUY. AS A ROCK STAR, STING MAY APPEAR A BIT PRIM AND EARNEST. BUT LET IT BE KNOWN, STING IS NOT THAT GUY."

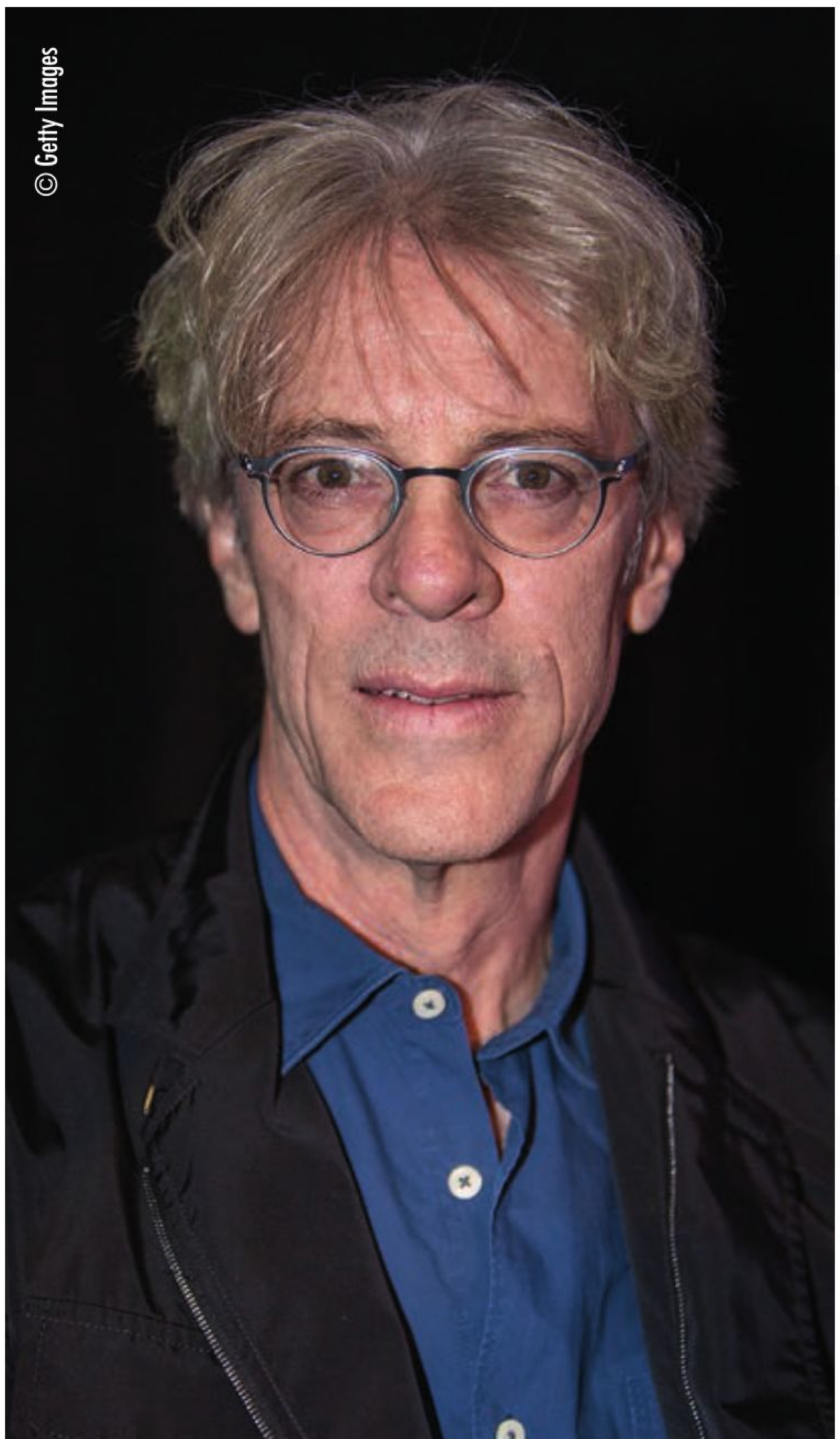
STEWART COPELAND



the song. We needed to get the album finished and if the overdubs had got out of control, *Synchronicity* would have been like Brexit and never happened. It meant that, by the end of that album, I was not on Stewart's Christmas card list. We're fine now – I met up with them on the reunion tour, and Stewart is one of the loveliest, friendliest people there is."

Stewart is quick to praise Andy Summers' role in *Every Breath You Take*, too, noting: "The demo was obviously a hit, but it was nothing like the current version, as Sting was singing the chords over a Hammond organ. Andy went, 'Guys, hello? We're a guitar band?' Andy is truly clever with harmony and worked out the song's arpeggiated guitar figure. One of our favourite in-band riffs is that, when Puff Daddy sampled *Every Breath You Take* on *I'll Be Missing You*, he sampled Andy's guitar figure, not the melody or the lyrics. Me and Andy go, 'Go on Sting, pay Andy his royalties' and Sting will say, 'OK, Andy, here you are'... not reaching anywhere near his wallet."

Every Breath You Take inspired the title of The Police's new boxset *Every Move You Make*, which rounds up all five albums plus a B-sides compilation. Stewart admits he's not played a Police album in



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Above: Andy Summers, Sting and Stewart Copeland in a lighter moment in the studio

Left: Stewart Copeland, 2019. The Police drummer is widely regarded as one of the best sticksmen in rock and pop.

full "since July 1983, or whenever it was that we'd finished mixing *Synchronicity*." But he's proud of how his band's music has aged. "We made great records, despite the fact it wasn't very comfortable to make them," asserts Stewart, 67. "It's only now that we understand what our conflict was about and acknowledge that everyone's point of view was valid. And we had a very strong work ethic. Nobody ever shirked, nobody stayed at home. All three of us were always leaning forward – and that's the personality in each of us that led to the conflict: one person was anointed the god of all music, while the other two were still pushy sons of bitches. In amongst all that tension, there was always a positive attempt to make it work."

HOT FUZZ

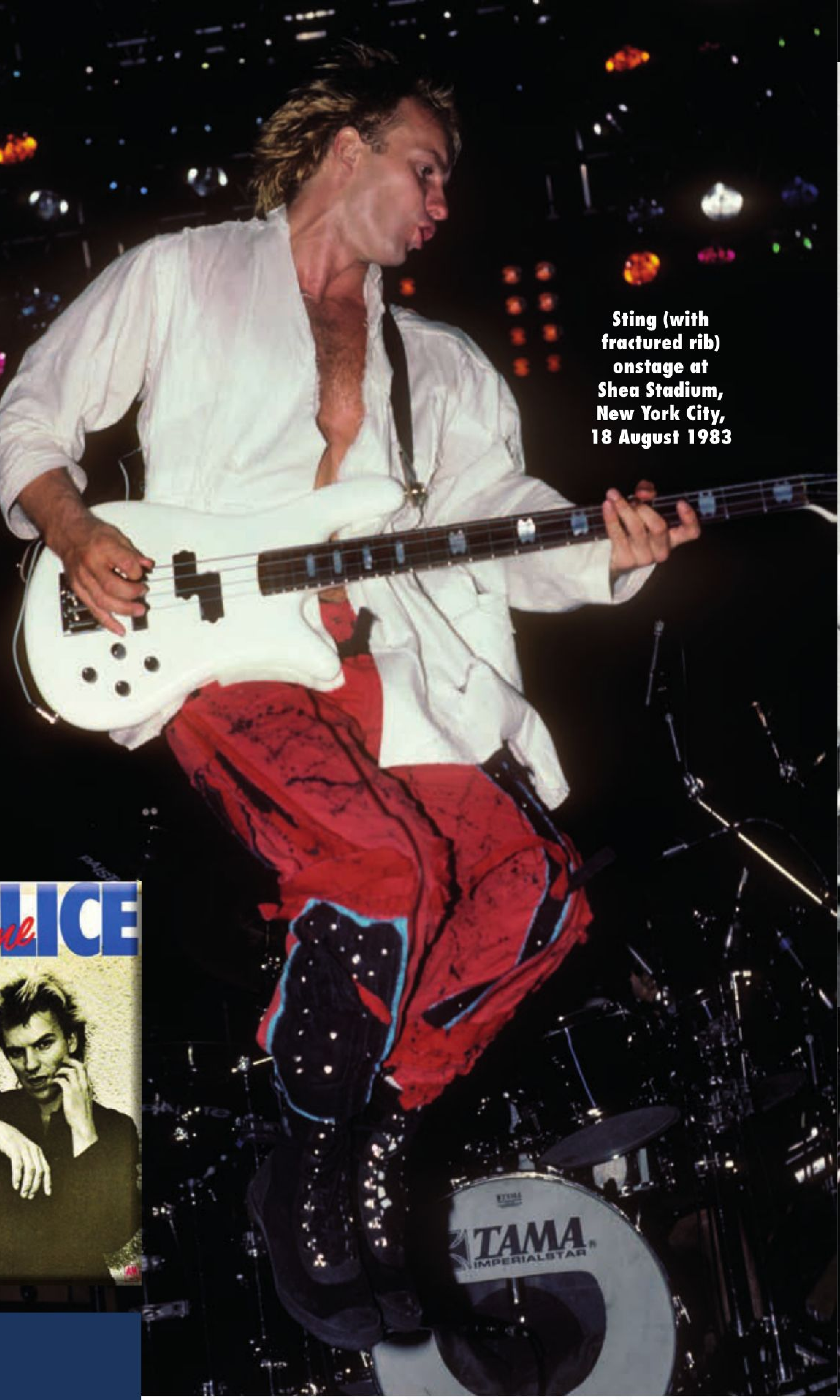
The Police's story could have been very different. Stewart and Sting formed the band in 1977, when the singer/bassist moved to London and met Stewart for a jam session. They'd first met when the drummer's old band, cult prog-rockers Curved Air, played in Newcastle on tour. Another former progger, guitarist Henry Padovani, was persuaded to cut his long hair and shave his beard off to fit in with the punk look. Andy, a decade older and a veteran guitarist for Eric Burdon and Kevin Ayers, quickly joined, too. "It was Andy who told me Henry didn't fit," recalls Stewart of Henry's dismissal. "I didn't believe him, but he was right."

With just three people in the band, Stewart believes, "it gives everyone lots of room, while also requiring a great deal from everyone. With three musicians, you don't step on each other's territory."

It's easy to forget now, but Police classics *Roxanne*, *Can't Stand Losing You* and *So Lonely* flopped when first released as singles. "We weren't discouraged when those early singles failed," Stewart insists. "Most bands assume they'll make it, or else you wouldn't be doing it. We had that same arrogance and youthful optimism. We were too young to be impressed at the great tenacity A&M Records had in sticking with us."

Roxanne finally became a hit in the summer of 1979, when The Police were starting to get noticed on their first US tour. It charted when The Police were already booked to support comedy band Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias on tour. "When we came back from the States, we had no idea it had kicked off," remembers Stewart. "We didn't have any security, and there was a mob out there on the first show. Being mobbed was exciting, but our success was incremental. There was never a point where it suddenly got so big that we went, 'Wow!' For us, the first milestone was playing Dutch festival Pinkpop in '79. We were on early in the afternoon, but we tore that place over and left it a smouldering ruin. We knew that it was a show to remember, if only for ourselves."

It's The Police's second studio LP that ranks as Stewart's personal favourite. "*Reggatta de Blanc* might not be our greatest album, but it was the most fun to make, even though Sting only had 20 minutes to write it after the raging blaze of touring. The quality and inspiration were at their height and it doesn't take 20 years to write three notes as perfect as the chorus of *Don't Stand So Close To Me*. Our collaboration as a band was at its most fruitful and we were in our most creative phase," Stewart explains.



Sting (with fractured rib) onstage at Shea Stadium, New York City, 18 August 1983

STING GETS A RIBBING

The Police's defining concert came on 18 August 1983, when they played to 60,000 fans at Shea Stadium in New York during the *Synchronicity* tour, supported by Joan Jett And The Blackhearts and R.E.M. "It was a beautiful evening and the place was really worked up after Joan Jett's amazing set," says Stewart. "It was one of our best shows; we just blazed through it. Because it harks backs to The Beatles, if you're an English band playing Shea Stadium, you've officially conquered America."

The show also became infamous for Stewart supposedly beating Sting up so badly backstage that he played the show with a broken rib. True? "Technically, a bone *was* broken," admits the drummer. "We were hamming it up for the cameras when Sting grabbed my *New York Times*, forgetting for some reason who was going to win *that* tussle.

"I had to retrieve this important document, we're all laughing hysterically, when finally I applied a knee to the ribcage. Sting went, 'Goddamnit! Fucking Copeland!' He got up, we're all laughing, we play a blinding show that night."

The following day, Sting was "still feeling a little sore", according to Stewart. "Sting had an X-ray and, yes, there was a hairline fracture. The legend has become many other versions of many bones breaking. That's the truthful version, but in this modern age, that only makes it one version."

Four of The Police's five studio LPs appear on *Rolling Stone's* list of the 500 Greatest Albums Of All Time

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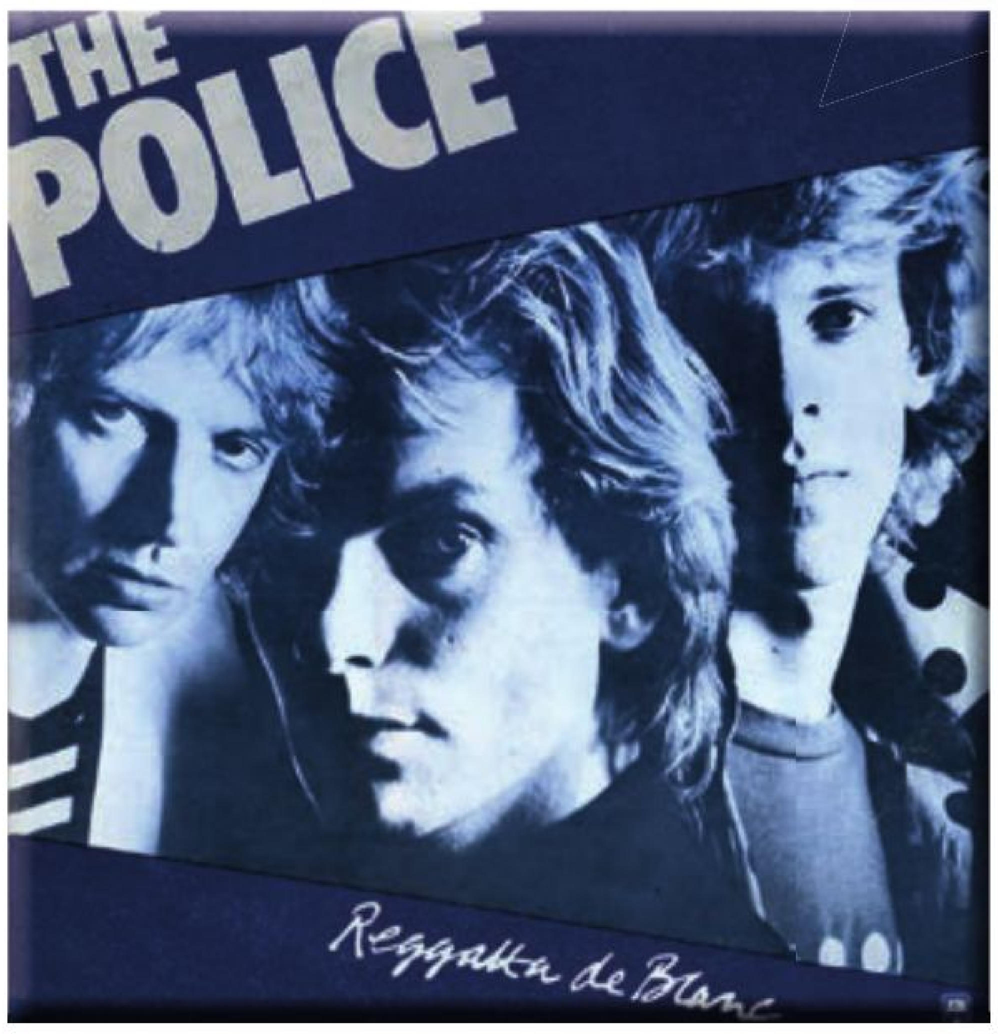
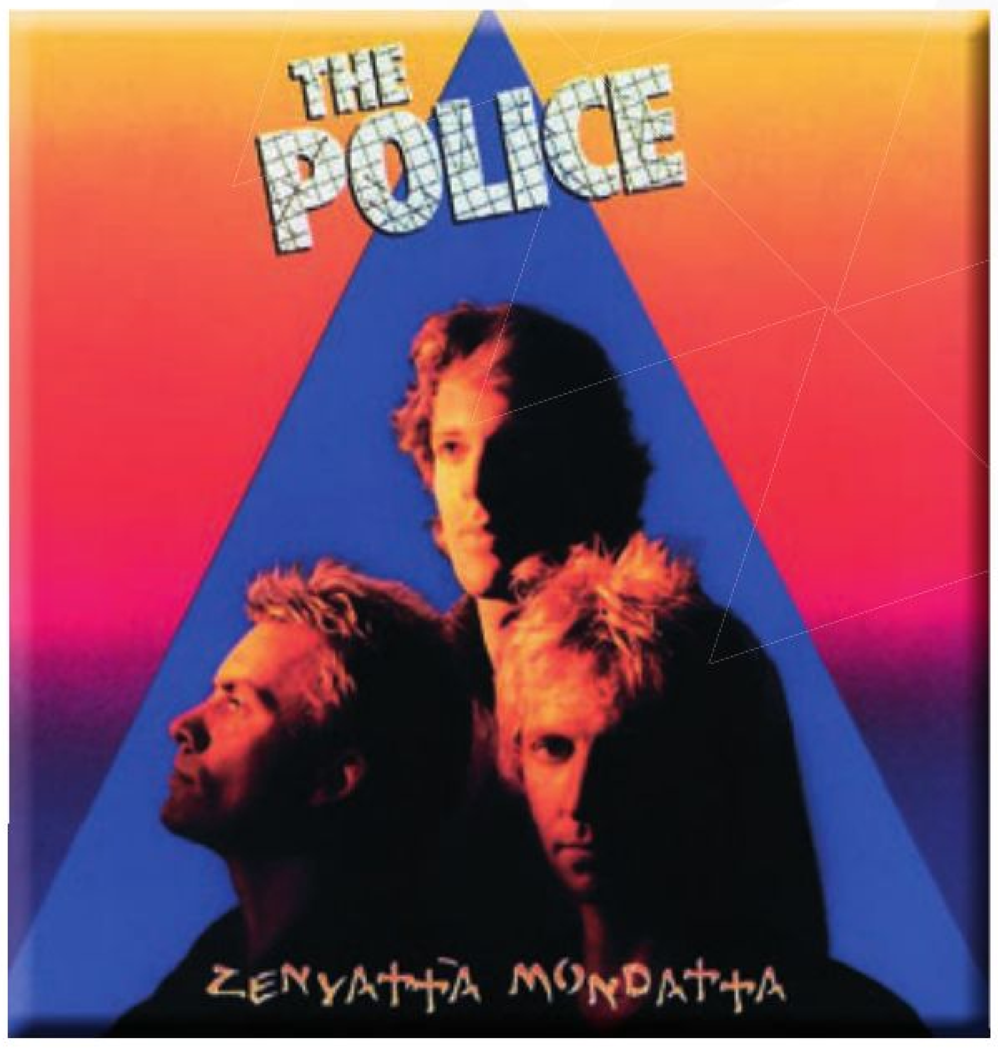
"REGGATTA DE BLANC MIGHT NOT BE OUR GREATEST ALBUM, BUT IT WAS THE MOST FUN TO MAKE. OUR COLLABORATION AS A BAND WAS AT ITS MOST FRUITFUL AND WE WERE IN OUR MOST CREATIVE PHASE."

STEWART COPELAND

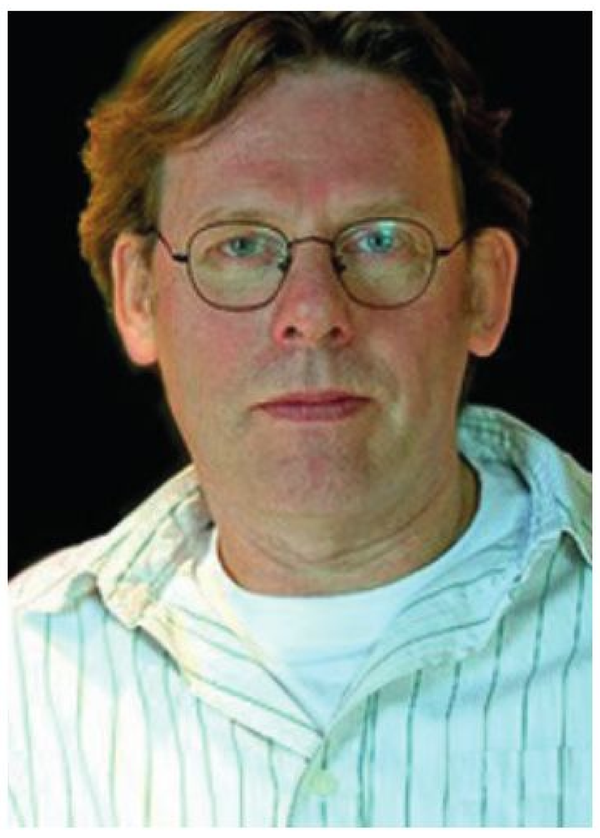




Reggatta de Blanc and its predecessor *Outlandos d'Amour* were made above a dairy in Leatherhead, Surrey, with former doctor Nigel Gray producing. An eccentric who went on to produce Siouxsie And The Banshees before retiring in 1987, Nigel was an amateur who built his own Surrey Sounds studio. "Nigel was a great referee," Stewart recalls. "Nigel would have had a much tougher job keeping us playing nicely on the later albums, but he was great at the human part – making sure all three voices were heard and having us enjoy the studio process."

ONE ARTISTIC TRUTH

By third album *Zenyattà Mondatta*, tensions were rising. Made in the Netherlands for tax purposes, Stewart says: "By *Zenyattà*, Sting was very clear in his mind what The Police's music should be. He's pretty darned clever in his vision but, for Sting, there's only one artistic truth. All his creative juices tell him this, but the other two mortals in the room also had their musical truths. The person writing those fantastic songs had every right to develop fully-fledged ideas of what the music should be, but the others should have got to mould the result, too. It was manageable on *Zenyattà*, but the wrong motives started to be assigned to each other: one person imagines the other is trying to smother them out of existence, while the other imagines the other guy is just jealous and trying to intrude."



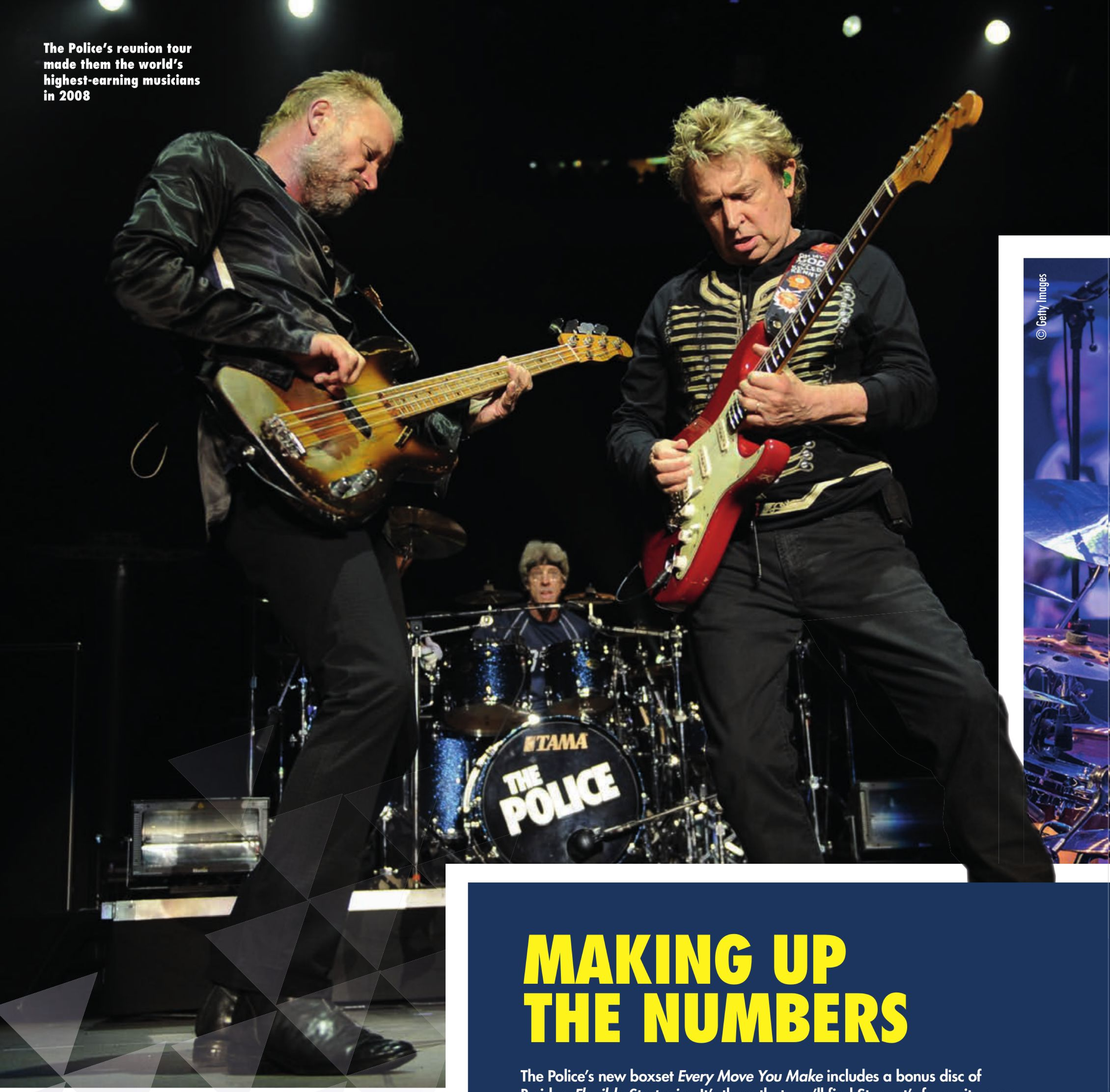
Producer Hugh Padgham has worked with some of the music industry's biggest names, including David Bowie, Kate Bush, Genesis and The Human League

Keeping up their album-a-year output, it was time for a change of producer for 1981's *Ghost In The Machine*. Hugh Padgham had been recommended to Sting by Andy Partridge after producing XTC's album *English Settlement*. "Good three-piece bands always really excite me," says Hugh. "The same as everybody, when I first heard *Roxanne*, I went, 'Christ, what's *this?!*' I loved the simplicity of their albums before I worked with them. They sounded great, especially as they were made for two-and-sixpence. They wanted a change from Nigel, firstly as they wanted to expand their music and also because Nigel was a bit of a bad influence. Even though he was a qualified GP, Nigel introduced a coke problem. When Miles Copeland rang my manager to see about me working with The Police, his first question was, 'Does Hugh do drugs?'"

Transforming their previous miserly recording budget, *Ghost In The Machine* was made at George Martin's studio AIR in Montserrat. "With hindsight, we know our strife wasn't all that bad," laughs Stewart. "At the time, it felt harsh and diabolical. But the results are great records we're all very happy with. And the truth is, it wasn't that diabolical. Being in The Police was like wearing a Prada suit made out of barbed wire."

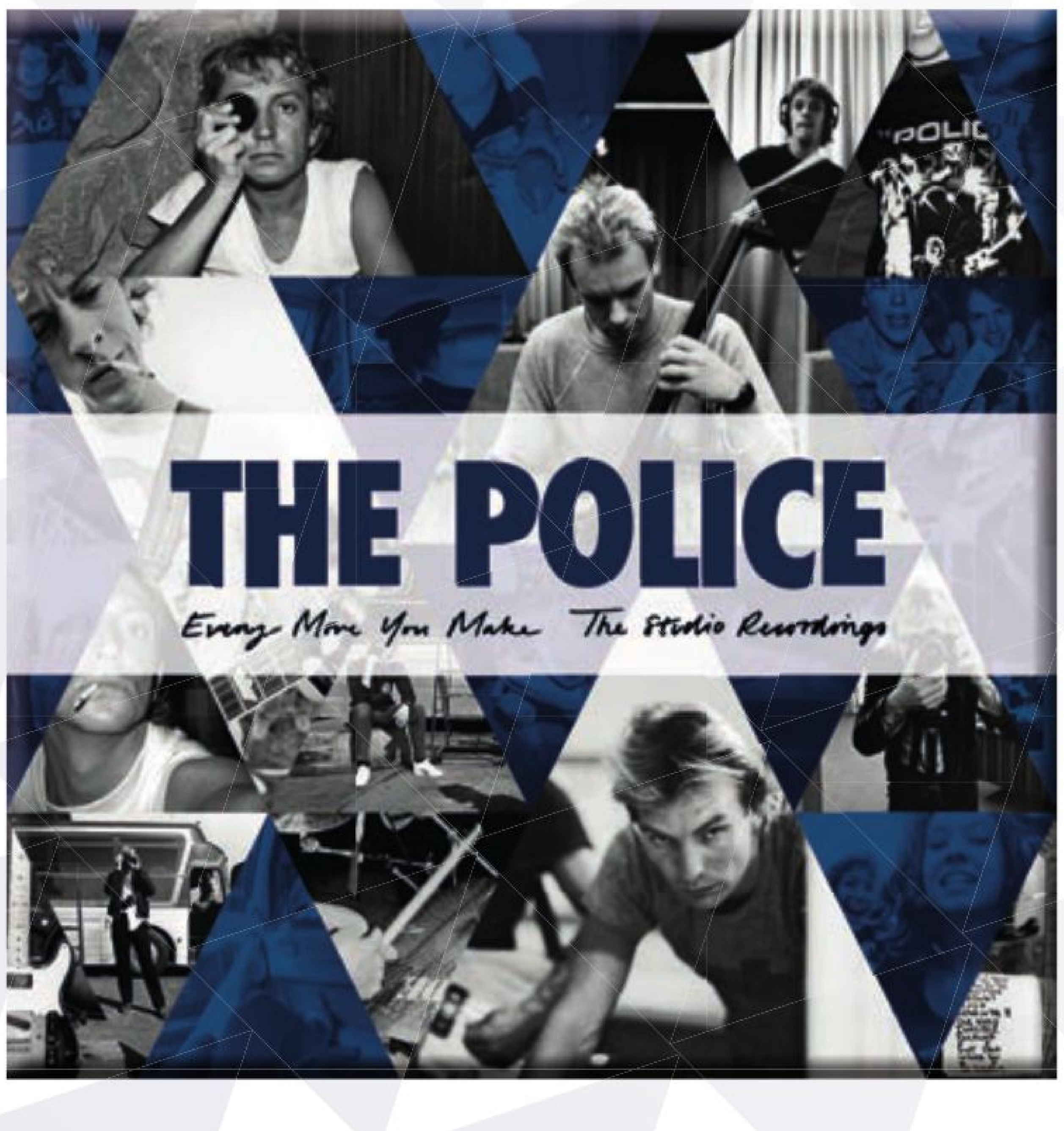
Expanding the sound meant horns and keyboards were suddenly all over songs such as *Too Much Information* and *Rehumanize Yourself*. "When Sting pulls out an instrument, something really cool will happen," acknowledges Stewart. "When he first pulled out an oboe on tour, that had a cool feel, because he was only playing a couple of notes. But, because Sting should have been drowned at birth, five minutes later, he's playing 20 notes. Thankfully, the sax is easy to play and there's no disputing that what Sting played on *Ghost In The Machine* is all really cool parts."

Hugh describes the atmosphere on *Ghost In The Machine* as "pretty good – a bit of healthy bickering", apart from trying to make *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic*. "Whatever we tried to record didn't work," recalls Hugh, also famed for his work with Genesis, David Bowie, The Human League and creating Phil Collins' gated drum sound on *In The Air Tonight*. "We tried reggae, full-on rock, faux-reggae, whatever. It was the one track not gelling – we used the demo as the backing in the end. Stewart did an amazing job because, without a click-track to follow, he was



The Police's reunion tour made them the world's highest-earning musicians in 2008

© Getty Images



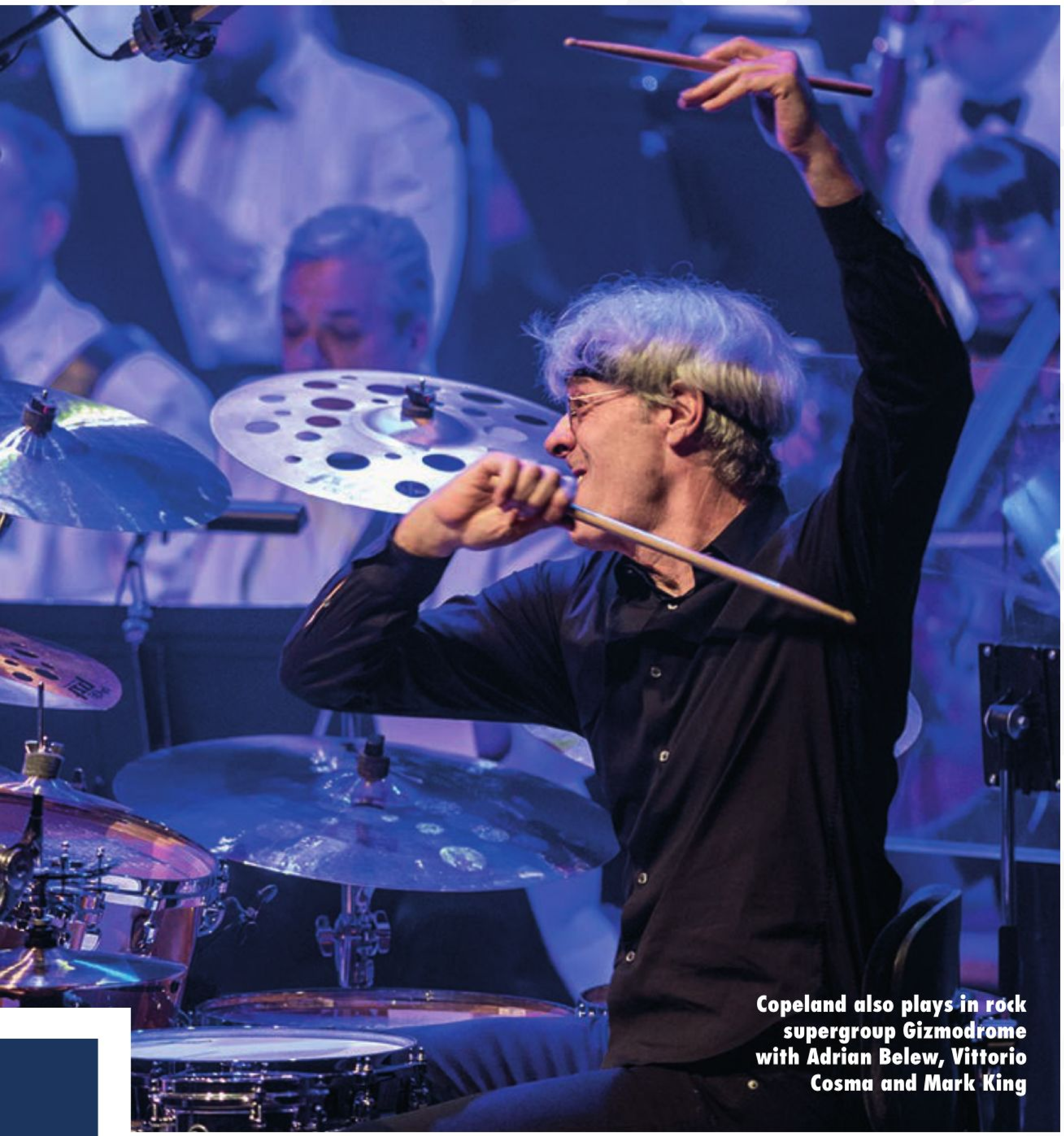
MAKING UP THE NUMBERS

The Police's new boxset *Every Move You Make* includes a bonus disc of B-sides, *Flexible Strategies.* It's there that you'll find Stewart's favourite ever Police song. *Murder By Numbers* was initially only available on cassette copies of *Synchronicity*, as it wouldn't fit on the vinyl version.

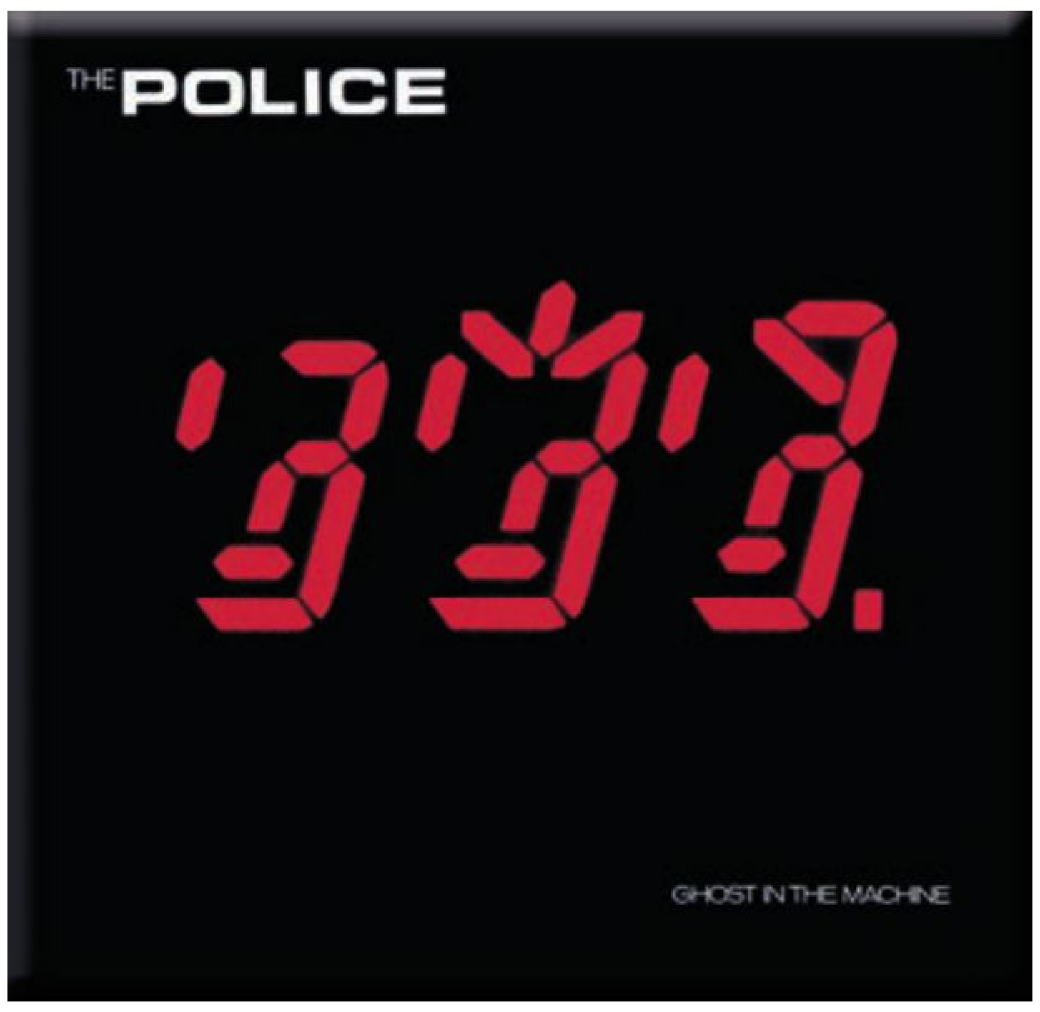
"It astonishes me that my favourite Police song is in the B-sides column," laughs Stewart. It was a choice between *Murder By Numbers* and the Stewart-penned *Miss Gradenko* to make the cut for the album. "*Miss Gradenko* has its adherents," says Stewart. "People really like it, and it's one of the songs that I still play at my orchestral shows. There are other songs on *Synchronicity* I would have swapped for *Murder By Numbers.* I really like our B-sides."

The B-side is where several of the songs Stewart and Andy wrote for the band ended up. "I wish Sting had sung some of Andy's songs," says Stewart. "I thought a lot of them were pretty catchy. I know it made it onto *Zenyattà Mondatta* rather than a B-side, but Sting refused to even play on Andy's instrumental *Behind My Camel* – and that won a Grammy. That's another in-band riff: 'Come on, Sting, give Andy your Grammy.' To which Stingo will go, 'OK Andy, here it is. And here, have some money, too!'… not reaching anywhere near his wallet."

"STING THOUGHT THE STUDIO WAS CREATIVELY BORING, SO HE'D WANT TO DO EVERYTHING AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. 'SLAPDASH' ISN'T QUITE THE WORD I'D USE, BUT HE DIDN'T MIND MISTAKES." HUGH PADGHAM



Copeland also plays in rock supergroup Gizmodrome with Adrian Belew, Vittorio Cosma and Mark King



able to put drums over the already-recorded demo and make it sound incredibly vital."

The album gave Hugh his first taste of Sting's unusual approach to recording. "Sting thought the studio was creatively boring, so he'd want to do everything as quickly as possible," Hugh explains.

"'Slapdash' isn't quite the word I'd use, but he didn't mind mistakes. It didn't happen very often, but if he sang out of tune, he'd always growl, 'Why?' when I said, 'We need to do that line again.' He'd make me play it back to him, me thinking, 'Why don't you just do it again?' The other thing that was quite irritating was Sting's jogging trampoline."

Ah, Sting's jogging trampoline. A brief early-80s fad, the jogging trampoline was 3ft across and simulated running when the 'bouncee' attached sandbags to their arms and feet. This was before treadmills, OK? You can see Sting bounce about on his jogging trampoline in the *Synchronicity* tour film. "At shows, it looked like a punk-pogo," says Hugh. "But Sting wanted to use it in the studio, too. You'd think that, recording an album, you'd want your bass to sound as clean as possible. But no, Sting wanted the vibe. Which I understand, but it meant he was jumping up and down on a trampoline, when the studio floor at AIR was sprung anyway. The whole bloody floor was jumping up and down and I'd be thinking, 'Christ, the tape recorder isn't liking this!' Because Sting was jumping up and down, there'd be mistakes in his playing. In those days of 24-track studios, you'd either have to force Sting to do it again or, if he wasn't around, I'd have to get his bass roadie Danny Quatrochi to punch it in."

GHOST BUSTING

And then came *Synchronicity*. Stewart graciously accepts Sting didn't need to make The Police's fifth album. "By *Ghost In The Machine*, we'd got as big as we were ever going to get," he admits. "Sting very generously stuck it out for one more album than he had to. For our career, we broke up at exactly the right time. We didn't see the other side of the parabola."

Which is easy to say now. In 1982, literally nothing had been recorded in the first fortnight of making *Synchronicity*. Miles Copeland flew over for a crisis meeting. "It was shocking," says Hugh. "I wasn't used to such incredibly babyish behaviour. Sting and Stewart were infantile. Poor old Andy was left piggy-in-the-middle, though he could be pretty grumpy himself. It was scary, too, because it was my job to get the record made."

The emergency meeting was held at AIR's swimming pool. As Stewart says of their surroundings: "We were in paradise, creating our own hell. But in the bitter despond of that trench warfare, we could all hear that this music was fucking great."

For Hugh, the arguments are partially what makes the album so good: "Side one, where the fast songs are grouped together, has an incredible energy, which I think was borne out of anger." He credits Sting for the precision of songs like *King Of Pain* and *Wrapped Around Your Finger*, enthusing: "We'd mute out parts so the chorus comes in bigger as a contrast and to make songs breathe more. I give Sting huge credit for that, as it was mainly me and him mixing in Quebec."

Although The Police re-recorded *Don't Stand So Close To Me* and *De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da* in 1986 for a hits compilation, there's been no new music since *Synchronicity*. Stewart doesn't believe there should be, after an abortive attempt during the reunion tour. "What made the reunion tour worthwhile was seeing the effect we had on the audience," summarises Copeland. "So long as the audience went crazy, there was a good reason for us to take each other's bullshit: 'This is why I put up with you, motherfucker.' Going into a studio, there's none of that. Rehearsing was bad enough, but at least we know how *Message In A Bottle* goes. Any arguments, you'd check the record: 'What people have paid $300 for sounds like *that*, so that's what we're going to do.' End of argument. A new record? No audience, no affirmation, no reward. Just hell on earth." The Police like their Prada suits a little more comfy these days. ■

● The Police's boxset *Every Move You Make* is out now on UMC/Polydor

THE ESSENTIAL

Queen

As flamboyant as they were musically diverse, the larger-than-life foursome filled stadiums across the globe and shifted millions of albums, not to mention singles, with their bombastic, mock-operatic, largely unclassifiable yet hugely accessible sound. There's no stopping **Sean Egan** now…

There was never another band quite like Queen. Plenty of groups have essayed rock, prog rock, opera, funk, pop and 20s pastiche – but not all on the same album. Just as no other band exhibited a facility with so many styles, no other band was made up of four members of equal songwriting ability.

Pianist and frontman Freddie Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara), guitarist Brian May, bassist John Deacon and drummer Roger Taylor all wrote Queen hits. Meanwhile, if harmony singing layered to pack the punch of a musical instrument was something taken up successfully by others (notably ELO), Queen were its pioneers and masters.

Queen's lack of restraint or proportion means that they aren't to everyone's taste. Their corpus is both sublime and ridiculous, containing heartfelt pathos and effete affectation, great craftsmanship and doubtful taste – sometimes all in the space of one song.

They made some of the greatest popular music ever heard. *We Will Rock You*, *You're My Best Friend*, *Don't Stop Me Now* and *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* alone would have sealed a band's reputation, but on top of these and other classics, Queen were responsible for the unique and epoch-marking *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

So vast is their multi-generational fanbase that more than two decades after the death of Mercury, and even following the subsequent retirement of Deacon, Queen's brand name continues to be a big-bucks proposition.

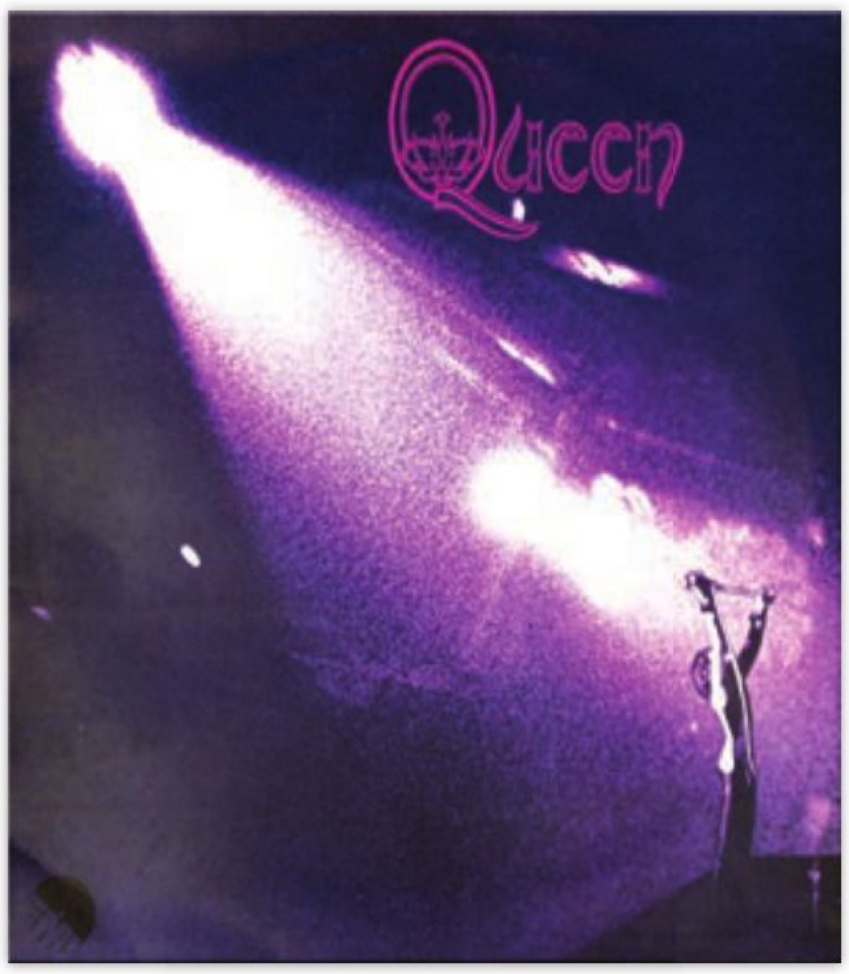
Not only is *We Will Rock You*, a musical based on their songs, still packing them in, but in recent years they have successfully toured with guest vocalists. A much-awaited Freddie Mercury biopic will be with us any time now.

Here, we take a chronological look at the desirable vinyl product of an ensemble that – love 'em or hate 'em – were indisputably extraordinary. Rarest entries refer to UK releases, unless otherwise stated.

40 KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE/SON AND DAUGHTER (1973)

Queen's opening salvo to the world was a galloping Brian May composition, subsequently appearing as the opening track on their eponymous long-playing debut. Although *Keep Yourself Alive*'s anthemic, defiant chorus is undeniably glam-like, the track is otherwise straight-ahead progressive rock, right down to a brief but impressive drum solo.

£ *Rarest* 1973 EMI (South Africa) £220



39 QUEEN (1973)

The keynote song of Queen's first album was Mercury's *Great King Rat*, a medieval epic that demonstrated the young pretenders' unashamed kitchen-sink approach. Although too deep and discursive to be pop, the music on *Queen* is too agile to be guilty of the worst excesses of prog or heavy metal. It is, in other words, a new sound. The sound would be altered, refined and expanded down the years, but it would remain quintessentially Queen.

£ *Rarest* 1992 EMI (Czechoslovakia, green vinyl)

38 SEVEN SEAS OF RHYE/ SEE WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN

(1974)

Queen's first hit single arrived in early 1974 when the band secured a slot on *Top Of The Pops* after David Bowie bailed out of a scheduled appearance. This was despite the fact *Seven Seas Of Rhye* was not quite yet in the shops. Mercury had now developed the flimsy instrumental that closed the first album into a fully fledged song bursting with blood-and-thunder fantasy.

£ *Rarest* **1974 Elektra (New Zealand) £145**

36 KILLER QUEEN/ FLICK OF THE WRIST

(1974)

The hit side of this double-A release was tinged with 1930s crooning, but even the ultra-camp Noël Coward would have raised an eyebrow at this effete, fatuous creation. Yet the concoction works as enjoyably silly and baroque pop, partly because nobody ever recorded anything quite like it (nor would they want to). A transatlantic hit, it represented Queen's breakthrough.

£ *Rarest* **1975 EMI (Italy) £165**

34 BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY/I'M IN LOVE WITH MY CAR

(1975)

Bohemian Rhapsody topped the UK chart for nine weeks and cracked the then very conservative American Top 10. It's a unique, sprawling, blissful mixture of ballad, opera and hard rock containing multiple key, mood and style changes. Some, including at times Mercury, suggested it was meaningless, but in fact the song contains a clear, and heart-breaking, narrative thread.

£ *Rarest* **1995 EMI £210**

37 QUEEN II

(1974)

Despite Mick Rock's lavish cover design, the contents of *Queen II* were not much more impressive than the album's prosaic title. *Father To Son* is emblematic of the album's faults. Its straining, bland melody, flavourless harmonies, squalling guitars, overly sheened production and unnecessarily extended playing time render it dull. It demonstrates that for all the time and care lavished upon this album, it's actually a regression from the vitality and variety of its predecessor.

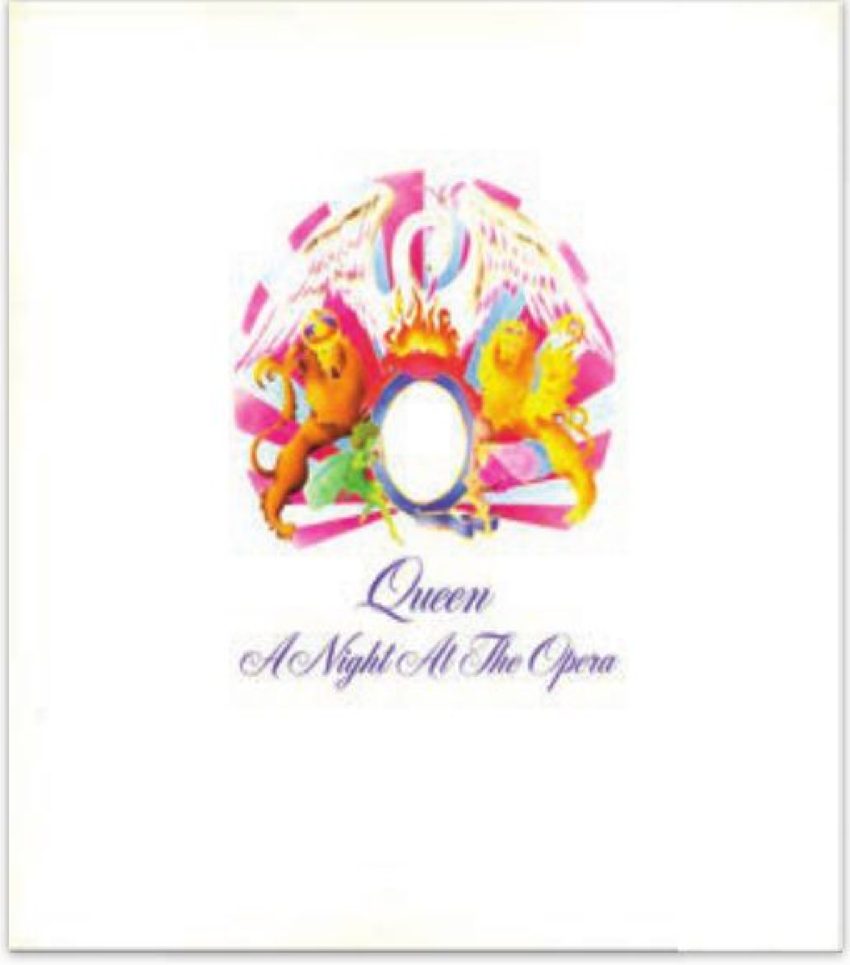
£ *Rarest* **1974 EMI (Denmark, gatefold sleeve)**

35 SHEER HEART ATTACK

(1974)

It might have seemed unwise for Queen to release a second album in 1974, but remarkably, it was their best effort yet. *Sheer Heart Attack* is also really the first proper Queen album, setting the pattern for the Queen-LP smörgåsbord of styles. On the first album on which all four Queen members contribute songs, hard rock – *Stone Cold Crazy* – sits cheek-by-jowl with epic surrealism – *She Makes Me (Stormtrooper In Stilettos)*.

£ *Rarest* **1987 EMI (Japan) £205**



33 A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

(1975)

At the time, the most expensive album ever made in a British studio, *A Night At The Opera* remains Queen's magnum opus. *Bohemian Rhapsody* was just the start of its eclecticism. *Lazing On A Sunday Afternoon* is more delightful granny music, *Love Of My Life* a heartbroken piano ballad, and Deacon's life-affirming *You're My Best Friend* the perfect pop song.

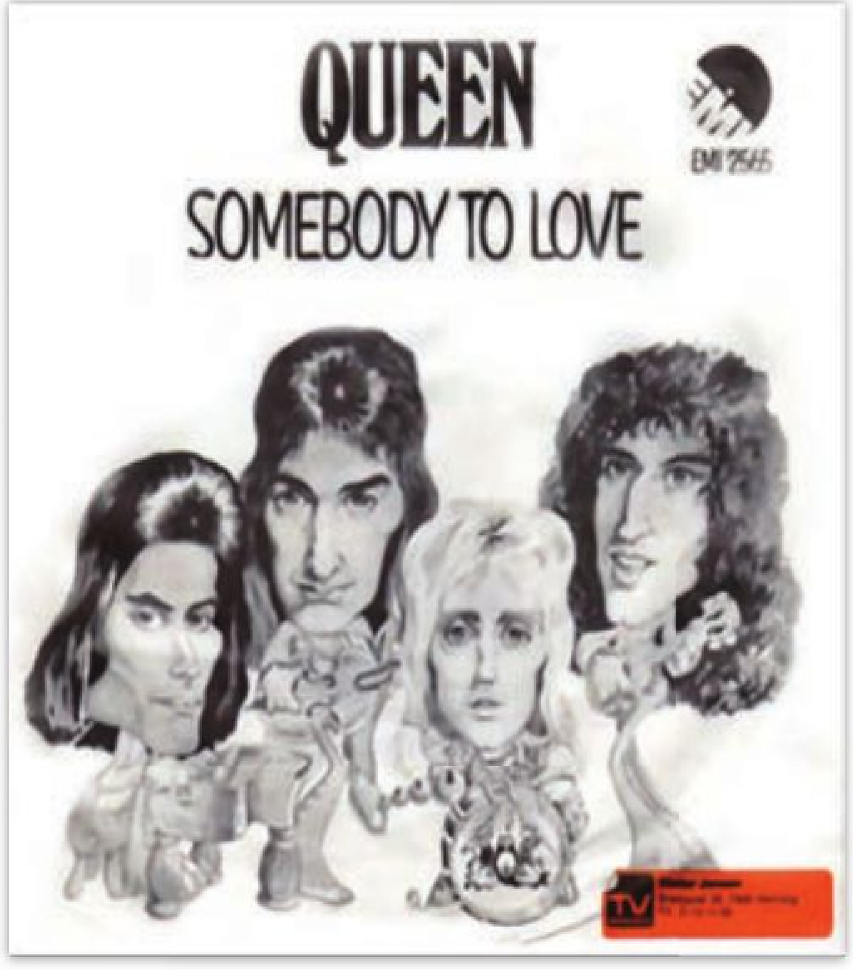
£ *Rarest* **2000 Hollywood (US, limited edition audiophile pressing) £175**

32

YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND/'39 (1976)

It was claimed that Queen were unhappy about the release of a second single from *Opera*. Yet this piece of radio bliss consolidated their new fame with a transatlantic hit that demonstrated that they weren't all about bombast. Perhaps it was because of this that the band soon got over their moral qualms about what in those days was termed "ripping off the kids": they pioneered the practice in the UK of plundering albums for singles.

£ *Rarest* **1976 EMI (Spain) £50**



31

SOMEBODY TO LOVE/ WHITE MAN (1976)

On the mid-tempo cry of romantic starvation on the A-side, the Queen mass harmonies never let up. Attached to Mercury's lead vocal from the get-go, they sometimes follow him, sometimes finish lines for him, sometimes foreshadow him and sometimes make arch asides to the listener. May throws in a suitably melodramatic guitar solo. The track is a great big piece of perfumed whimsy, but one few can find it in their heart to dislike.

£ *Rarest* **1976 EMI (Denmark) £90**

30

A DAY AT THE RACES (1976)

The fact its title and design were both inversions of those of their last album, plus its lack of a *Bohemian Rhapsody*, caused some to dismiss this LP as "Beggar's Opera". Possibly, but it's also solid, varied and enjoyable. As well as *Somebody To Love*, it boasts the hard-riffing *Tie Your Mother Down*, 30s croon *The Millionaire Waltz*, the crunching lament for the fate of the Native American *White Man* and the oriental power ballad *Teo Torriatte (Let Us Cling Together)*.

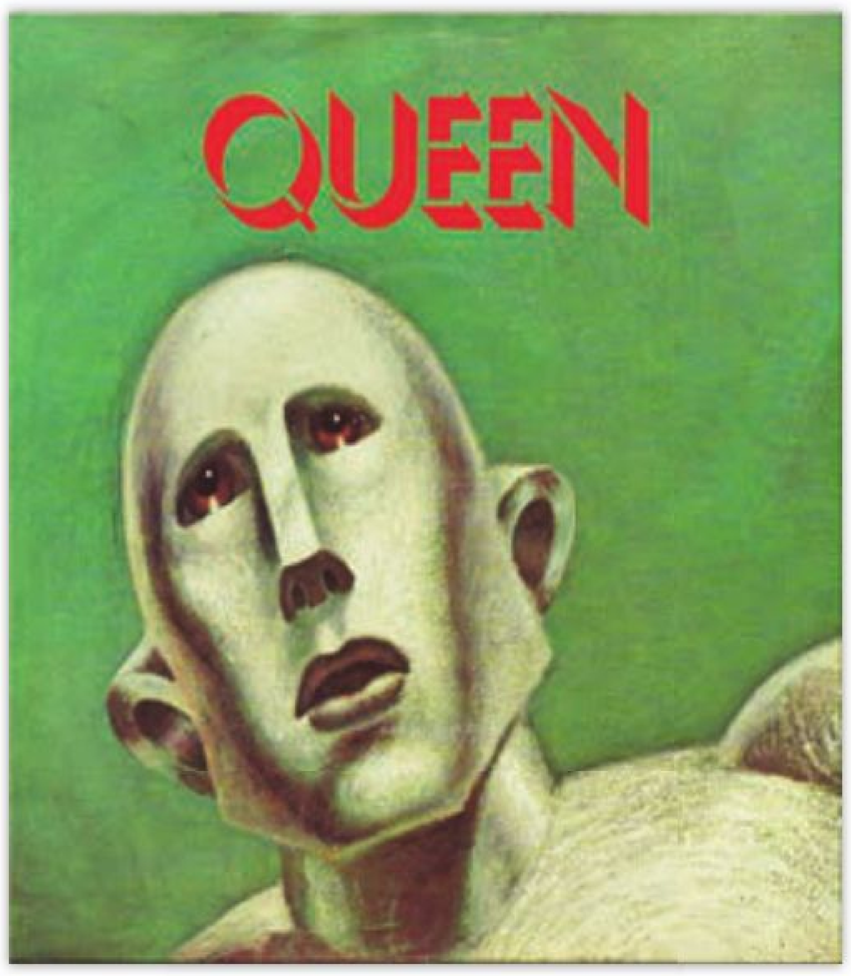
£ *Rarest* **1996 Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab (US, limited numbered edition) £120**

29

QUEEN'S FIRST E.P. (1977)

Tie Your Mother Down was also released on single, but – unlike the US – Britain was not yet ready for the avaricious act of mining a third 45 from an album. Queen got around that in Spring 1977 with *Queen's First EP*, which made *Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy* a minor hit by placing it in front of *Death On Two Legs*, *Tenement Funster* and *White Queen*, all tracks from previous LPs. This peculiar Queen sampler made No. 17.

£ *Rarest* **1977 Elektra (Australia) £45**



28

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS/WE WILL ROCK YOU (1977)

In an arms-waving affair, Mercury declares he and his fans the winners, although doesn't ever quite state what the opposition constitutes. The song is indelibly wedded to its flip side, *We Will Rock You*. With its hypnotic title line, unceasing thundercrack percussion and army of handclaps, Queen had instantly created the live-participation number composer May intended.

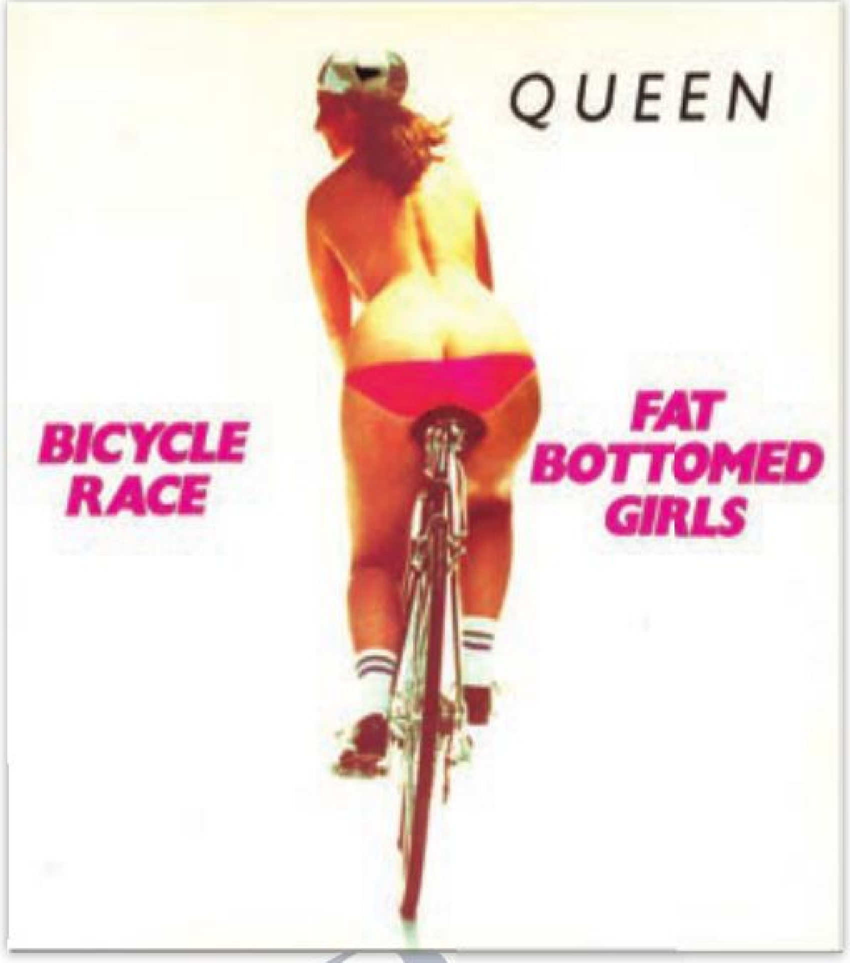
£ *Rarest* **1977 EMI (Australia) £24**

27

NEWS OF THE WORLD (1977)

With the punk wars raging, Queen found themselves in the critical firing line. On *News Of The World*, the harmonies are understated, running times mostly short and arrangements relatively basic. Although symbolically kept off the UK top spot by *Never Mind The Bollocks*, it was another fine effort. The rarest edition is a 40th anniversary pressing of 200-odd with exclusive artwork sold on one day at the MCM London Comic Con.

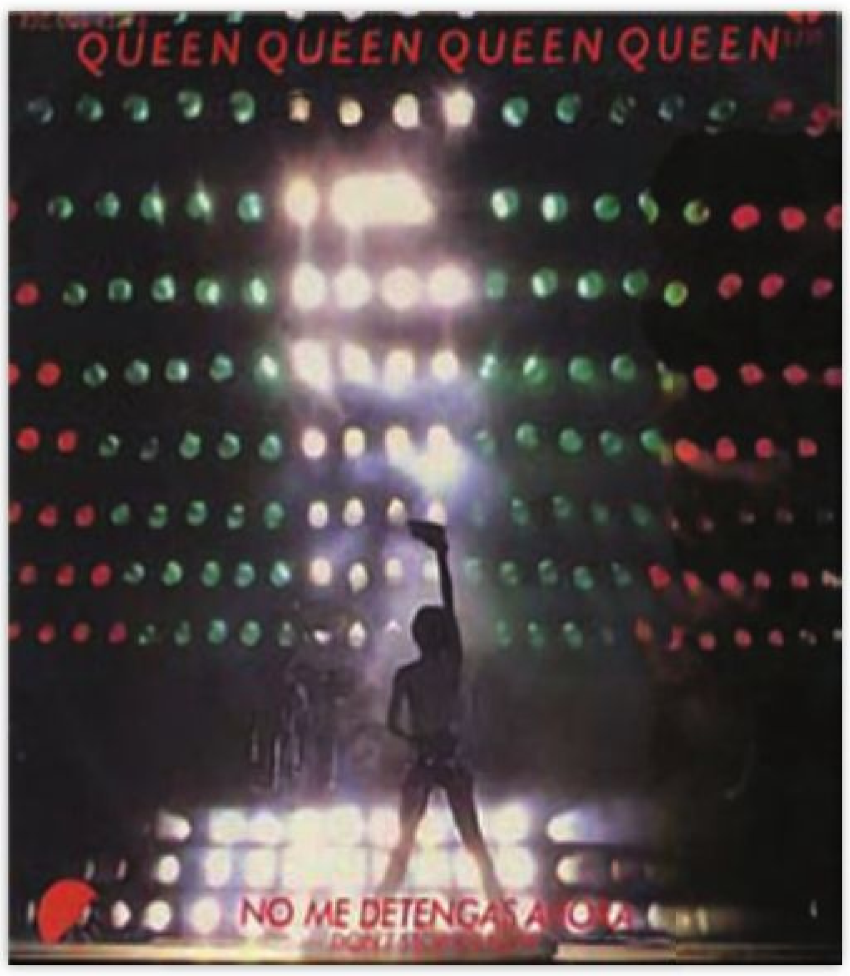
£ *Rarest* **2017 Virgin EMI (Marvel X-Men edition) £750**



26
BICYCLE RACE/FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS
(1978)

May's brilliant, strutting boogie celebrating the fuller female fundament was quite a shock to hear blasting over decorous 1970s airwaves. Mercury's *Bicycle Race* is catchy but bizarre in its invocation of the simple childhood pleasure. Each song on this double A-sided single refers to the other, the consequence of the blinding flash of insight that fat bottoms are sometimes placed on bicycle seats.

£ *Rarest* 1978 EMI (Philippines) **£70**



24
DON'T STOP ME NOW/IN ONLY SEVEN DAYS
(1979)

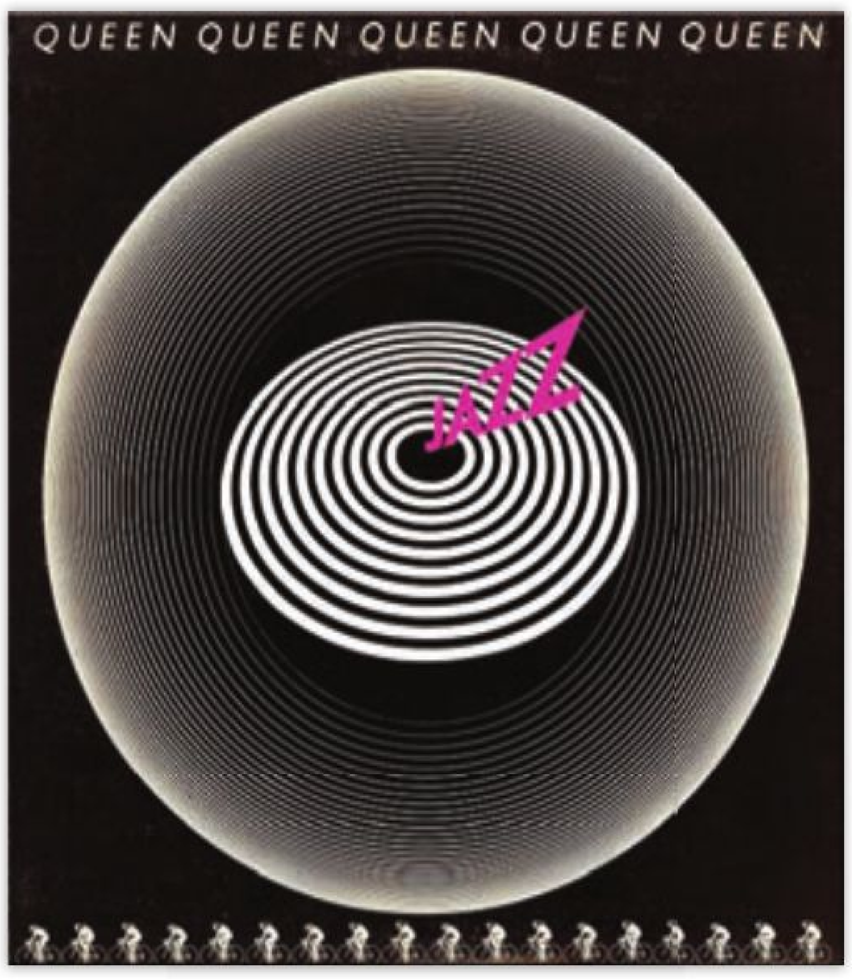
In reaching No. 9 in the UK, *Jazz*'s second single, unusually for the time, actually did better than the lead 45. It's mainly because *Don't Stop Me Now* is an intoxicating, headlong brew of seamless melody, pumping piano, brittle drums and hurricane harmonies. It also boasts a soupçon of daring, with Mercury's lyric planting clues to his sexuality as he offers to make both men and women "supersonic".

£ *Rarest* 1979 EMI (Mexico) **£60**

22
CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE/WE WILL ROCK YOU (LIVE)
(1979)

Queen go old-time rock 'n' roll. Mercury graces his song with a quavering Elvis-alike vocal and a chorus that descends to the bottom of the singer's socks. The fact the harmonies are a space age-variant of doo-wop underlines that the whole thing is pastiche, but it's so damnably likeable that one would have to be a real sourpuss to invoke purity.

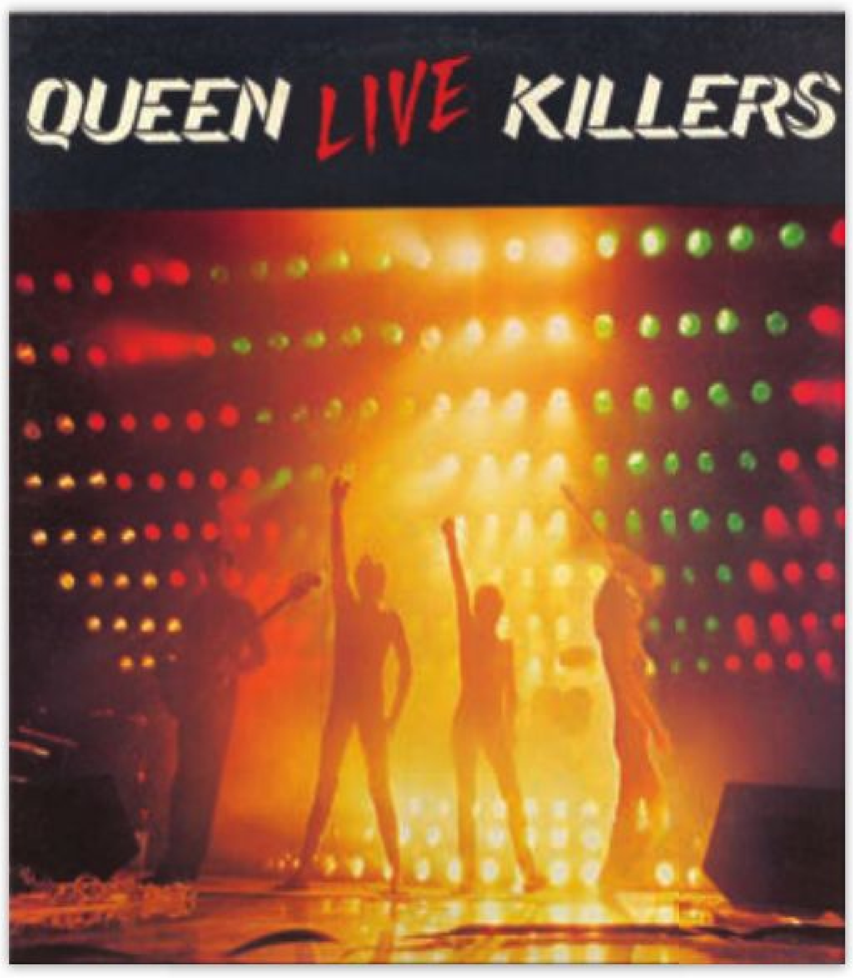
£ *Rarest* 1980 EMI International (Bolivia) **£115**



25
JAZZ
(1978)

Judging by the album's decadent New Orleans launch party, Queen quickly got over any sense of being chastened by punk. *Jazz*'s production is rather cold and hard, but as ever Queen proffer excellence and diversity, whether it be eerie exoticism in *Mustapha*, piano-dominated brooding in *Jealousy*, or acoustic balladry in *Leaving Home Ain't Easy*. *Rolling Stone*, though, weren't impressed, famously snarling: "Queen may be the first truly fascist rock band".

£ *Rarest* 1979 EMI (France, picture disc) **£100**



23
LIVE KILLERS
(1979)

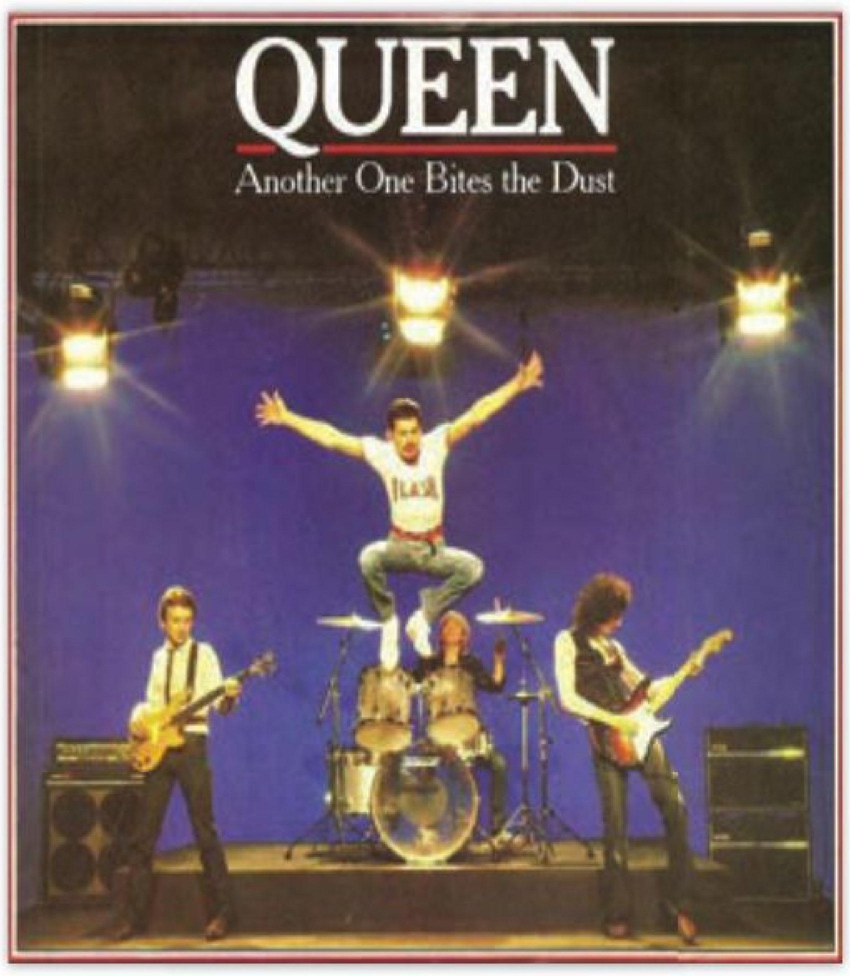
Mercury's showmanship acquired Queen a reputation as one of the world's best live acts. A double in-concert LP – a format *Frampton Comes Alive!* had recently made a viable proposition – therefore made perfect sense. Sadly, many Queen fans felt *Live Killers* a let-down, a poorly mixed selection of lacklustre *Jazz* tour performances. It also underlined how the multi-tracked intricacies of *Bohemian Rhapsody* defeated even Queen's live prowess.

£ *Rarest* 1979 Elektra (Japan, coloured disc) **£30**

21
THE GAME
(1980)

Following the longest gap yet between studio albums came an LP that briefly made Queen the biggest band in the world. Mercury promoted it with a startling mucho-macho look. *The Game* sees Queen reining back on their smörgåsbord approach. It's spare, too: May's lovelorn *Sail Away Sweet Sister* is one of the few lush tracks. Yet it also frequently achieves excellence, particularly *Save Me*, which is elegantly dignified like no previous Queen fare.

£ *Rarest* 1995 Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab (USA, numbered limited edition on 200g vinyl) **£65**



20 ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST/ DRAGON ATTACK

(1980)

For their critics, *The Game* saw Queen exceed even their own standards of avarice: this track was the album's fourth UK single. Deacon's lyric intriguingly equates the end of a relationship to slaughter, while his Chic-inspired bass riff is spellbinding. The overall result was a piece of funk so authentic that radio stations in the US assumed it to be the handiwork of a 'black' band.

£ *Rarest* 1980 EMI (Kenya) **£110**

18 FLASH GORDON

(1980)

Without visuals, Queen's musical accompaniment to the cheesy *Star Wars* bandwagon jumper is a slight listen. Yet there is some quality material present. Deacon's *Arboria (Planet Of The Tree Men)* is haunting, and Mercury's sensual contributions to *The Kiss* constitute some of the best singing he ever recorded. The Turkish release, which happens to be the most prized, hedged all bets by plastering a picture of Queen over Mercury's minimalist cover design.

£ *Rarest* 1980 Max (Turkey) **£75**

16 UNDER PRESSURE/ SOUL BROTHER

(1981)

With this collaboration with David Bowie, Queen engaged in the type of superstar team-up that is usually the preserve of anorak fantasy. *Under Pressure* wasn't quite the aesthetic triumph one might assume from such a pairing of giants. It has a memorable bass riff and an impressively imperial mien, but the lyric overreaches itself, straining for significance but floundering in banality.

£ *Rarest* 1981 EMI International (Bolivia) **£180**

19 FLASH/ FOOTBALL FIGHT

(1980)

Poor old Brian Blessed. Though an acclaimed Shakespearian actor, thanks to this 45 he's best remembered for his hammy exclamation of "Gordon's alive!". Rumour has it, Queen constructed the soundtrack of *Flash Gordon* piecemeal, distracted by recording *The Game*. *Flash's Theme* (as it is titled on the soundtrack) is iconic only by virtue of its "Flash! Ah-aaah!" refrain.

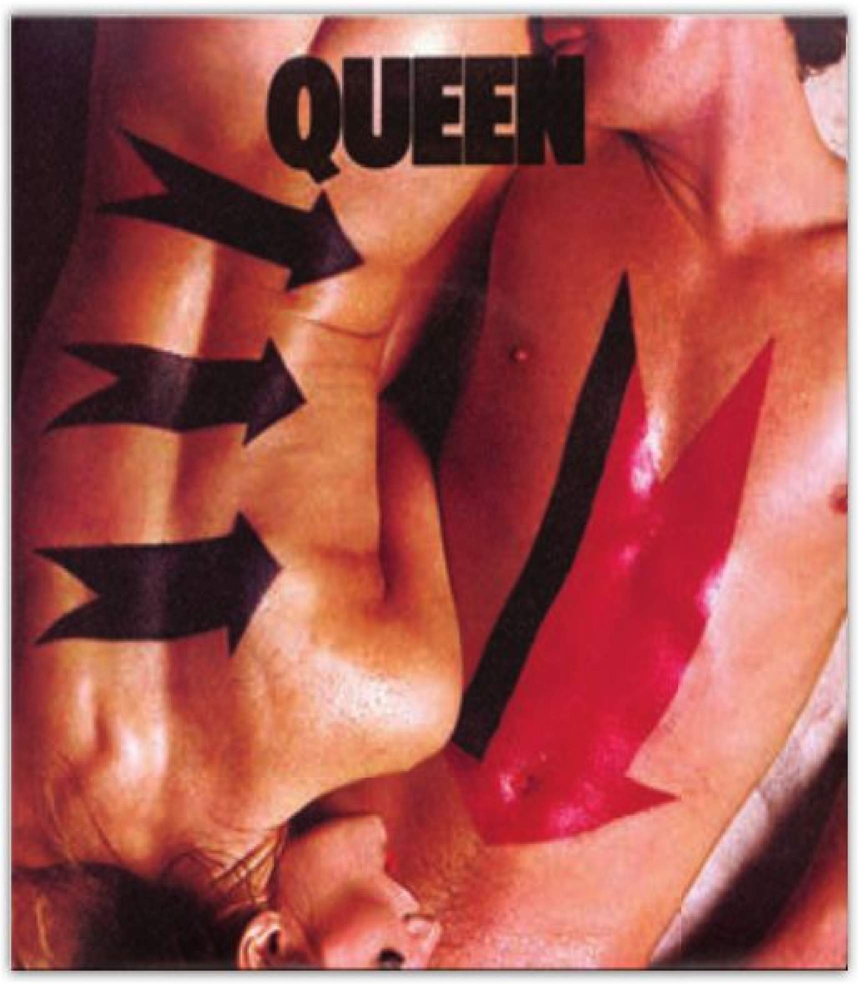
£ *Rarest* 1980 EMI (Mexico) **£15**

17 GREATEST HITS

(1981)

Queen's mélange approach could alienate as much as delight, but this collection seemed to please everybody: it's officially the biggest-selling UK album of all time. Though the non-chronological tracklisting differed from territory to territory, it constituted wall-to-wall hits and underlined the breathtaking sweep of Queen's talents. The release also arguably marked a demarcation point: some fans aver that, from this point on, Queen were never as good again.

£ *Rarest* 1981 Fálkinn (Iceland) **£40**

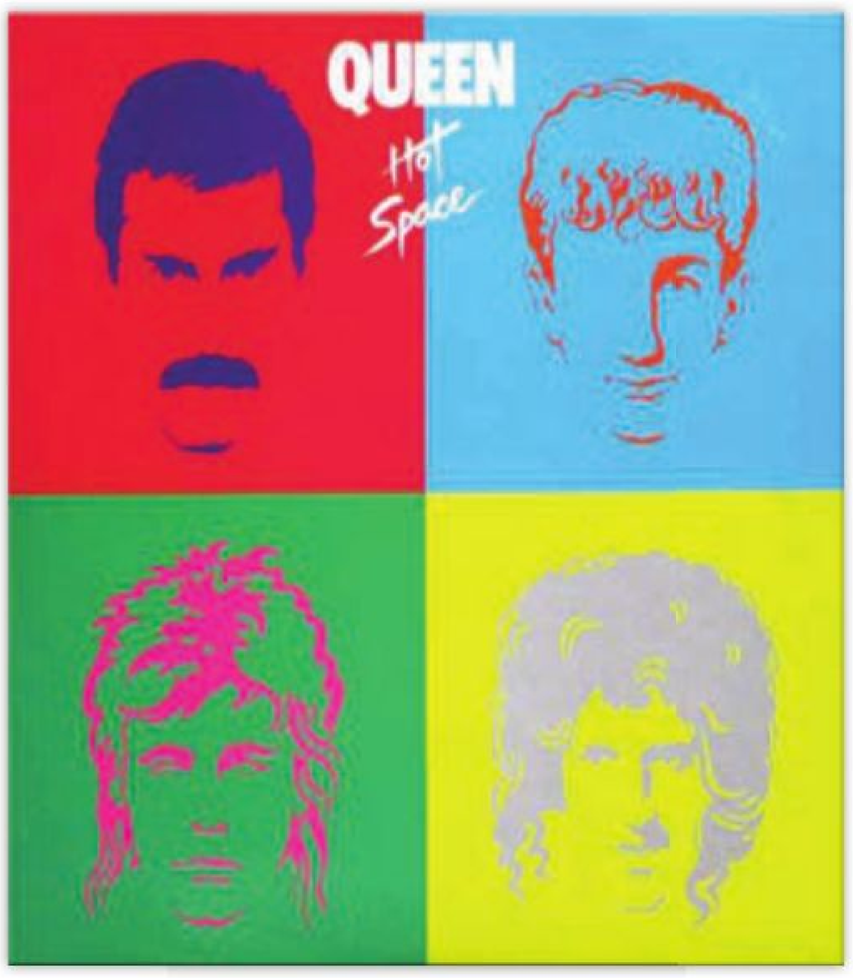


15 BODY LANGUAGE/ LIFE IS REAL

(1982)

Mercury's *Body Language* is threaded with some notably fine bass work from Deacon, but that's the only thing this bare, anonymous funk has to recommend it. Although a No. 11 in the States, it achieved a shockingly low UK chart placing of 25. The failure of all the *Hot Space* singles, the arbitrarily thrown-in *Under Pressure* excepted, could be interpreted as punishment for the glut of releases from *The Game*.

£ *Rarest* 1982 EMI (South Africa) **£40**

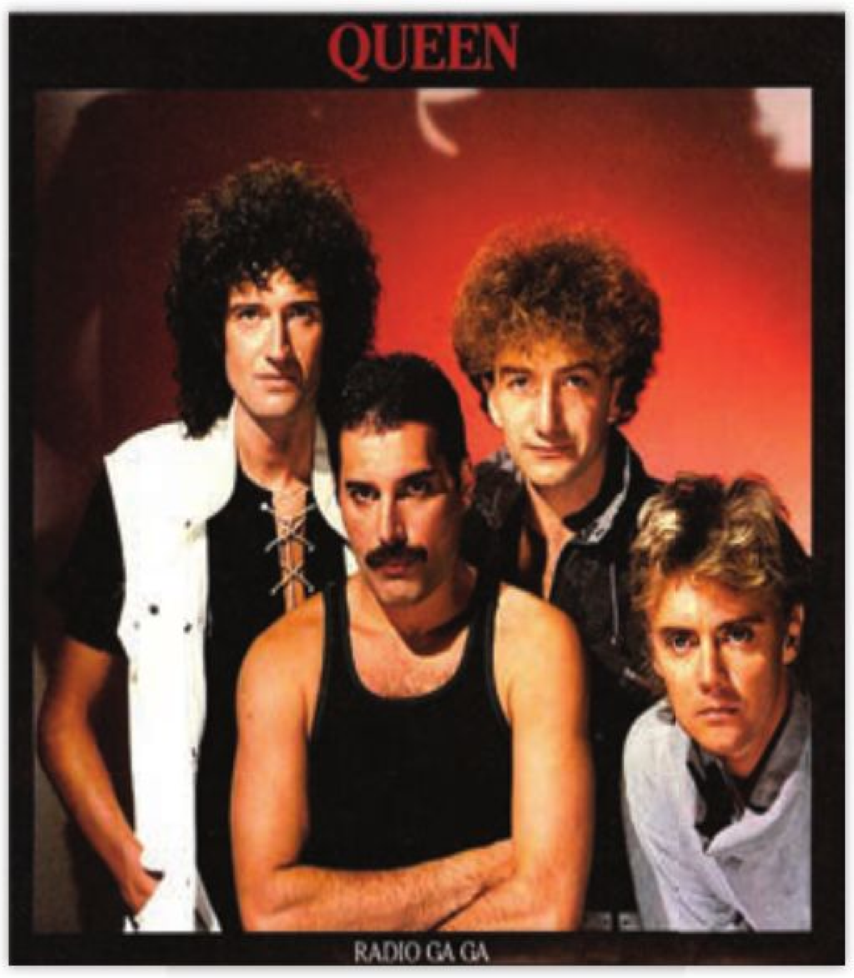


14 HOT SPACE

(1982)

Queen's long-standing No Synths policy was now history as they embraced modern funk with an absolutist fervour. The banks of artificial keys only compound the homogeneity created by Mercury singing lead on everything. The band can't rescue matters because their melodic skills and virtuoso musicianship are not called into service by such rhythm-oriented music. The summery Deacon/Mercury *Cool Cat* is one of the few highlights.

£ *Rarest* **1982 EMI (Argentina) £40**

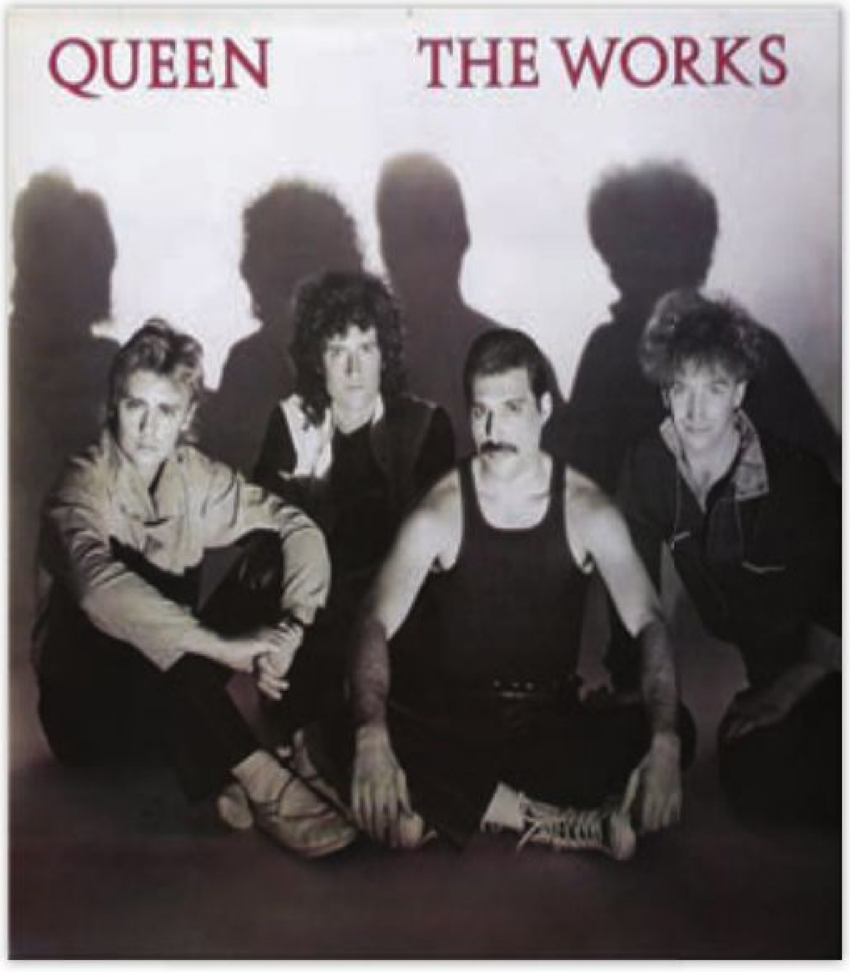


13 RADIO GA GA/ I GO CRAZY

(1984)

By the mid 80s, videos were the tail wagging the music-industry dog. Roger Taylor's alternately lilting and thumping lament for the image-less sounds he grew up hearing on the humble ol' wireless is genuinely moving, if we leave aside the awkward fact that it was Queen who kicked off the video age with *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and helped cement it with this record's lavish handclap-rally promo.

£ *Rarest* **1984 EMI (Peru) £20**



12 THE WORKS

(1984)

Commercial failure put a swift end to Queen's radical new direction. After a shell-shocked calendar year off, Queen returned with an album cleaving to their classic template, even if also conforming to the prevailing fashions of metronomic drums and synth riffs – a 'Plastic Queen' sound that would prevail. In the annals of comebacks, *The Works* is one of the most remarkable. All four of its singles made the UK Top 20, three of them making the Top 10.

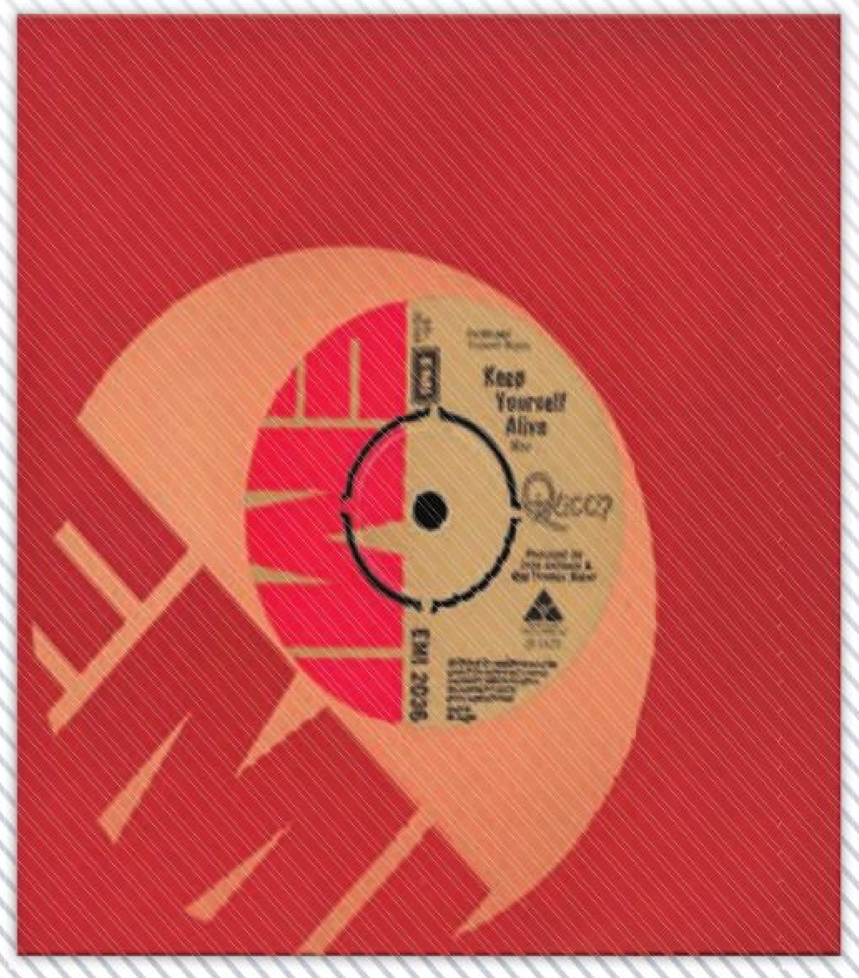
£ *Rarest* **1984 EMI (Uruguay) £50**

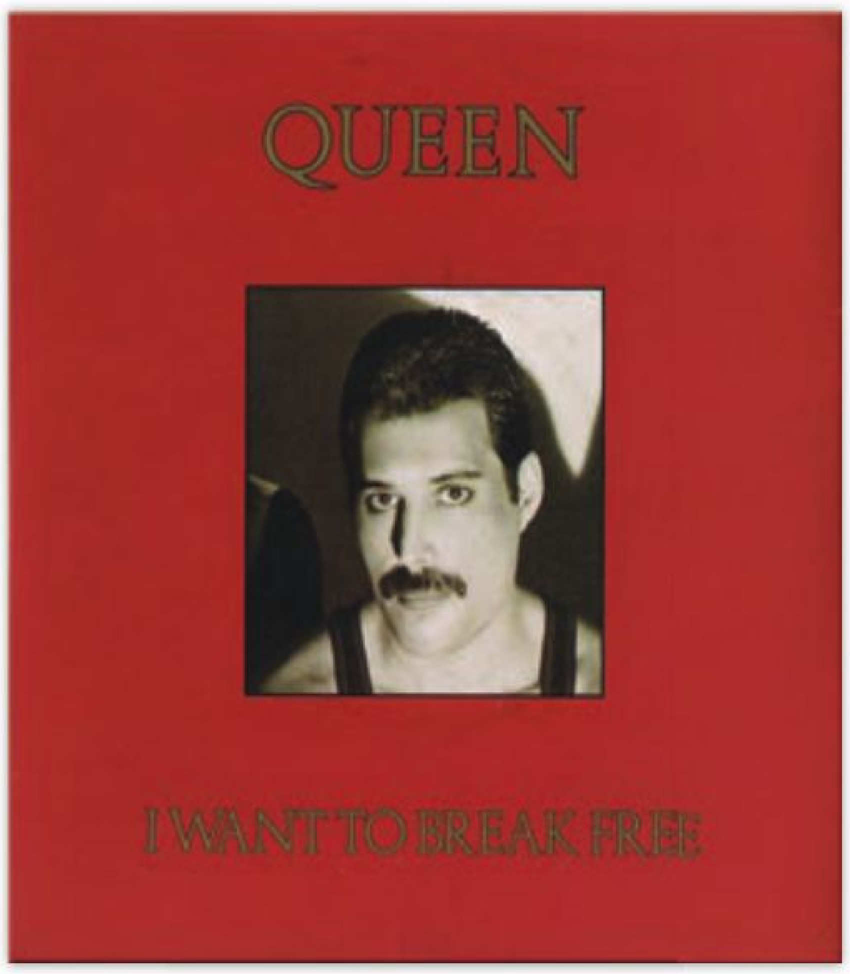
YOUR ACETATES AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT TRASH

When a pre-stardom Queen met a young Danny Baker

With their debut LP nearly ready for release, Queen decided to declare their genius to the world. Their chosen method was to take their album acetates to trendy West End record shop One Stop. Working behind the counter was a young Danny Baker.

In his memoir *Going To Sea In A Sieve*, Baker recalled one of the group announcing: "We want you to play our record in your shop. Constantly!" Manager John Gillespie put the record on the deck but after a minute of *Keep Yourself Alive* lifted the stylus. "Hate it," he said, dismissing them as Deep Purple soundalikes. Baker ventured the compliment they sounded like Stray. The group exploded in outrage at being compared to such minnows. Four-letter words flew back and forth before the group exited as dramatically as they'd arrived. They left behind not just their acetates but a carrier bag of promotional kimonos. The acetates were thrown in the bin when the store took receipt of the commercially released version of the album, while Baker recalls he wore the kimonos for a while before tearing them up for dusters.



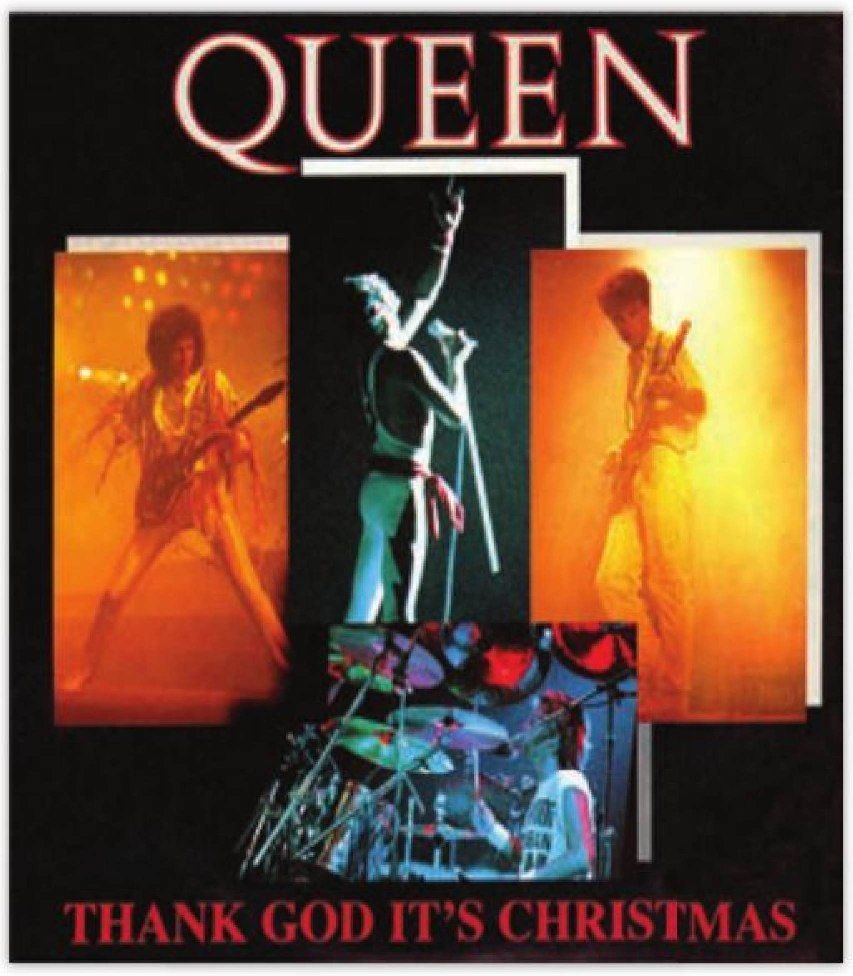


11 I WANT TO BREAK FREE/MACHINES (OR 'BACK TO HUMANS')

(1984)

The album's second single was Deacon-devised synth pop that could have been British chart faves Depeche Mode or Yazoo. Its melody and key changes are pedestrian, but there's no denying the track's catchiness. As with the taster single, the video helped hugely the record's chart ascent – except in America, where the sight of Queen pouting in drag killed their career.

£ *Rarest* **1984 EMI International (Bolivia) £40**



10 THANK GOD IT'S CHRISTMAS

(1984)

Overwhelmed with their recent success, Queen decided to issue this as a thanks to their fans. A May and Taylor co-write, it's reasonably affecting but too intense to have that singalong quality of a perennial Yuletide anthem. The record stalled just outside the UK Top 20. The most desired version is a 12" mispress which included the B-side tracks *Man On The Prowl* and *Keep Passing The Open Windows*.

£ *Rarest* 1984 EMI (Europe, 12", mispress) **£45**

9 ONE VISION/ BLURRED VISION

(1985)

This group-written single was recorded and released so soon after Queen's show-stealing performance at Live Aid that it was assumed to be a tribute to Bob Geldof rather than its real subject, Martin Luther King. The record is pretty confused as well. Its phased guitar riff, singalong chorus and "Whoa-whoa-ah!" vocal refrain are great stuff, but its compassion is sabotaged by an odd reference to fried chicken.

£ *Rarest* 1985 EMI (Uruguay) **£140**

8 THE COMPLETE WORKS

(1985)

A pre-CD boxset marked by real conscientiousness. Included was a tour itinerary booklet, a Queen world map and a magazine containing album artwork and a discography. The music consisted of Queen's entire catalogue up to that point. Each set was individually numbered. The price below is for unsigned copies: the 600 copies the band are reported to have autographed are the archetypal priceless artefacts.

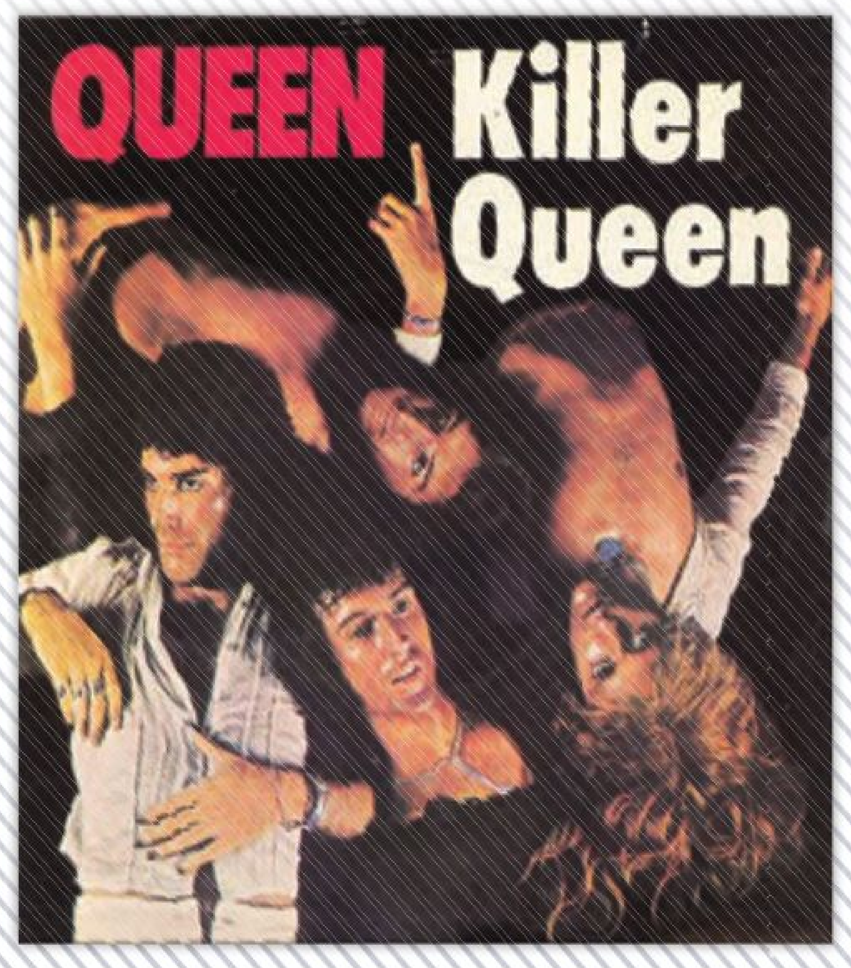
£ *Rarest* 1985 EMI **£160**

THE IVOR NOVELLO MYSTERY

Just how many Best Song awards did Queen win?

Reference books claim Queen, specifically Mercury, won two Ivor Novello Awards for Best Song. Gary Osborne, chair of the awards, however, reveals that the reference books are wrong.

Although *Killer Queen* was nominated for Best Popular Song in 1975, the accolade that year went to Carl Douglas for *Kung Fu Fighting*. The myth that Mercury won for *Bohemian Rhapsody* is more understandable. In light of the splendorous achievement of that record, it would have been absurd to give the award to anyone but Mercury. Sure enough, it went to… 10cc for *I'm Not In Love*. The awards committee's blushes were spared by the fact that they had no option but to give *Bohemian Rhapsody* the prize for 1975's Best Selling British Record. For the record, the other Ivor Novello awards Queen did win were Outstanding Contribution To British Music (1987), Best Selling A-Side (the re-released *Bohemian Rhapsody*, 1991), Best TV Commercial (May, 1991), International Hit Of The Year (Mercury, *Living On My Own*, 1993) and Outstanding Song Collection (2005).

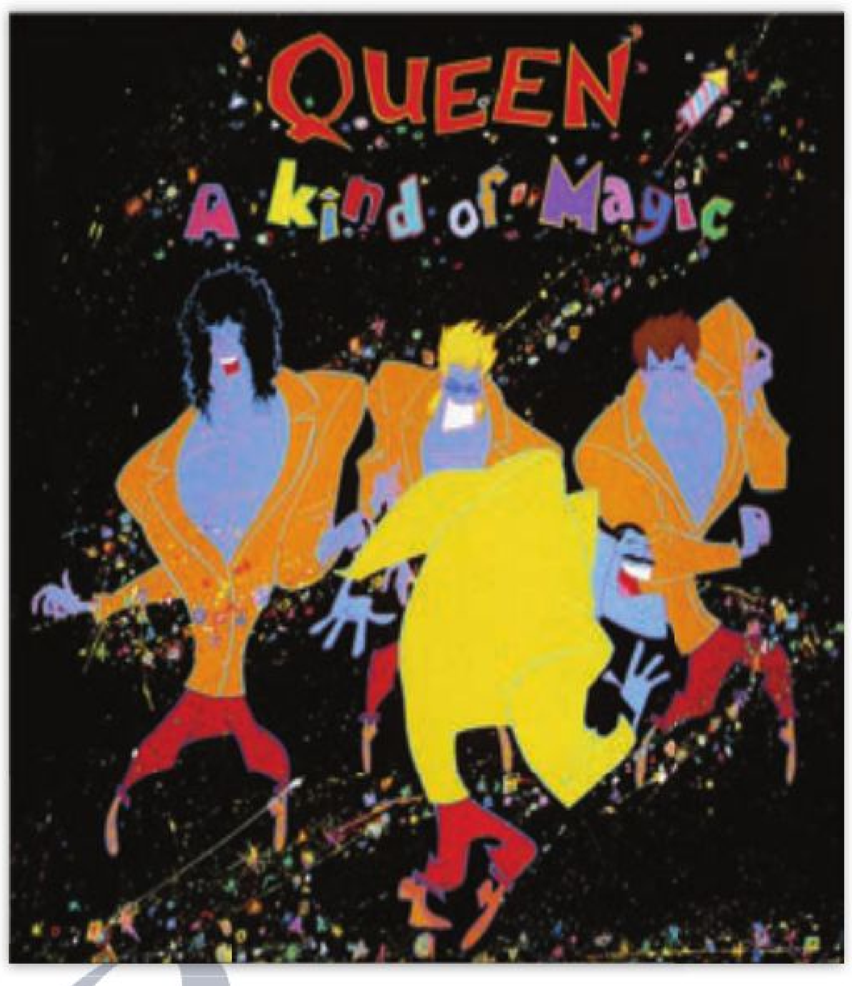


7 A KIND OF MAGIC/ A DOZEN RED ROSES FOR MY DARLING

(1986)

Almost all the songs on the *A Kind Of Magic* album appear in the movie *Highlander*. They comment on or are inspired by the action, but work perfectly well divorced from the cinema experience in exactly the way that the *Flash Gordon* soundtrack does not. For the finger-popping title track, Taylor uses a line uttered by Christopher Lambert's character Connor MacLeod.

£ *Rarest* 1986 EMI (Japan, 12-inch) **£30**



6 A KIND OF MAGIC
(1986)

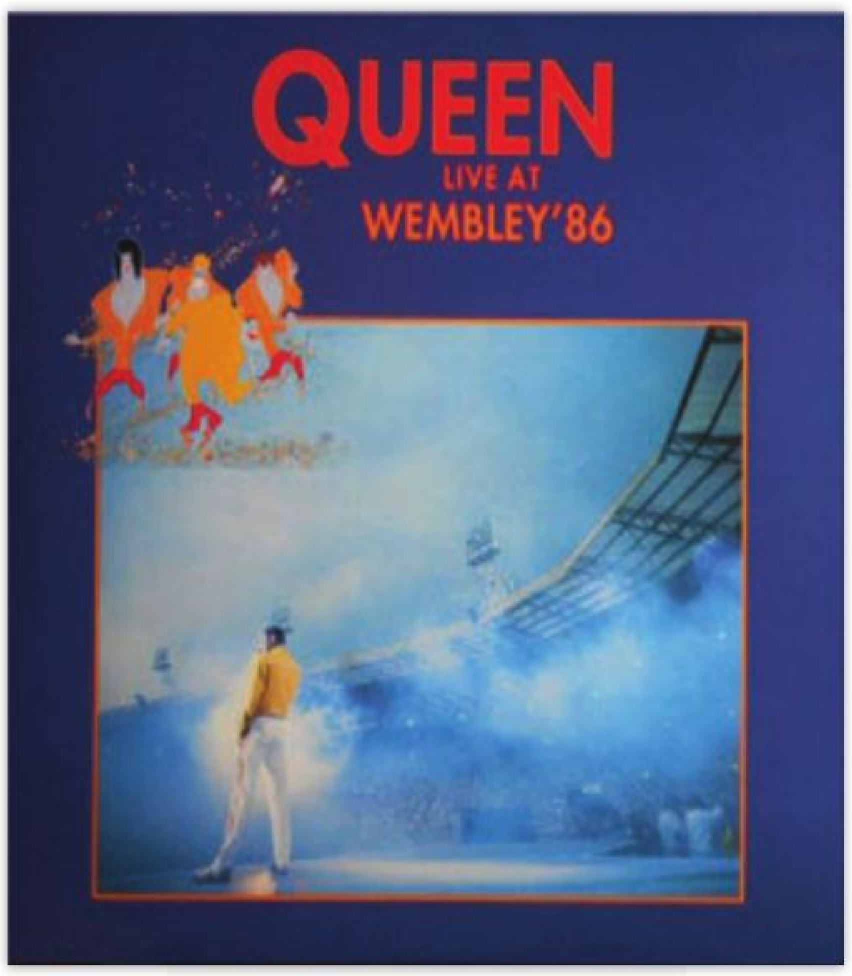
Queen could have issued a proper *Highlander* soundtrack, but their incidental music remained exclusive to the film. These tracks are all real songs and constitute a good set, which consolidated the band's reinvigorating Live Aid triumph. After Mercury's death, *Who Wants To Live Forever* came to seem like an early message of despair, but it was written before the singer's HIV-positive diagnosis, and furthermore by May.

£ *Rarest* **1986 EMI (France, red vinyl) £140**

4 THE MIRACLE
(1989)

After an unprecedented three-year gap, Queen returned with an album where fine craftsmanship was frequently ruined by cold shards of synthesiser and suffocating vocal mixes. Only Deacon's warm, busy bass remains unblemished by the keeping-up-with-the-Howard-Joneses approach. Highlights are the title track and the reflective *Was It All Worth It*. The fact there was no tour to promote *The Miracle* gives rise to the possibility that Mercury knew he was uninsurable.

£ *Rarest* **1990 HMV (India) £30**



2 LIVE AT WEMBLEY '86
(1992)

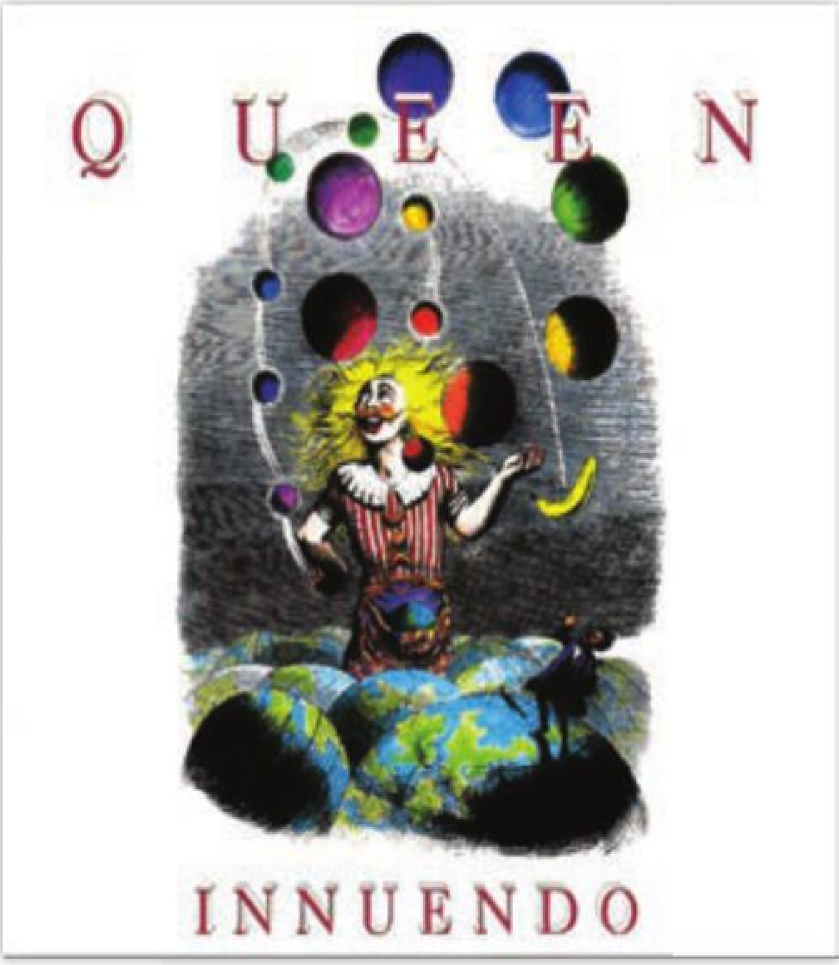
Live Magic (1986) was no more valuable a document of Queen's in-concert prowess than *Live Killers* had been, with the deficits this time revolving around savage editing. Ironically, the same year yielded recordings that made for a far better live album, even if it didn't get a release for six years. This double set captured the band in post-Live Aid euphoria on their final tour and contains hits, deep cuts and why-the-hell-nots such as *Big Spender*.

£ *Rarest* **1992 Parlophone £75**

5 I WANT IT ALL/ HANG ON IN THERE
(1989)

To banish the grievances that festered when Taylor got disproportionately rich after his *I'm In Love With My Car* appeared on the B-side of *Bohemian Rhapsody*, there was now a collective Queen writing credit in existence. That May sings the respites here, though, reveals the main composer. His caterwauling HM guitar is another symptom of Queen's submission to the current musical trends.

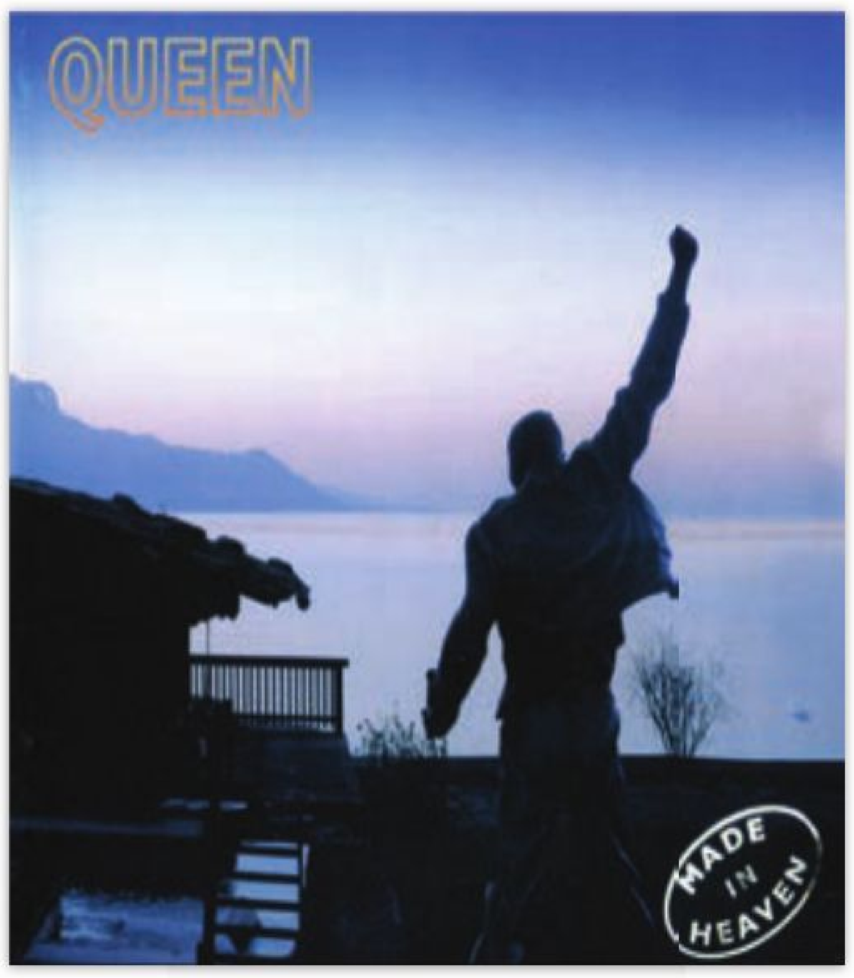
£ *Rarest* **1989 EMI (South Africa) £10**



3 INNUENDO
(1991)

An improvement. On *Innuendo*, drums are mixed mercifully lower and the classic Queen harmonies mixed higher, while there's a predominance of the organic in preference to the plastic. The mystical Led Zep-alike title track was a most unlikely No.1 when released as the lead-off single. *These Are The Days Of Our Lives* is Taylor's sweet elegy for a dying Mercury, while *The Show Must Go On* makes a fitting closer to the last Queen album of Freddie's lifetime.

£ *Rarest* **1991 Parlophone £40**



1 MADE IN HEAVEN
(1995)

An AIDS-stricken Mercury passed away on 24 November, 1991. On *Made In Heaven*, Deacon, May and Taylor constructed an album around their deceased colleague's voice. The result is easily the best Queen album since *The Game*. Bizarrely, Mercury comes across as more alive than ever, a consequence of his unusually breathy singing technique. The album was a worldwide success, eclipsing sales for many previous Queen releases.

£ *Rarest* **1995 Parlophone (gatefold, limited edition) £145**

THE LIFE OF BRYAN

AS HE NEARS HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY, BRYAN ADAMS – SINGER, SONGWRITER, RECORD PRODUCER, GUITARIST, PHOTOGRAPHER, ACTIVIST AND VEGAN – SHOWS LITTLE SIGN OF WINDING DOWN. HE TALKS TO CLASSIC POP ABOUT HIS 40 YEARS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS AND HOW HIS NEW ALBUM HAS FOUND HIM CO-WRITING WITH ONE OF THE BIGGEST POP STARS ON THE PLANET...

JOHN EARLS

© Bryan Adams

Ever since his fourth album, *Reckless*, in 1984 featured *Summer Of '69* and *Heaven*, all of Bryan Adams' albums have reached the Top 10. The energetic *Shine A Light* – featuring Ed Sheeran co-writing the title track and a Jennifer Lopez duet made with Ariana Grande's producer – has kept Bryan firmly where he belongs. Fresh from a sell-out arena tour, the Canadian icon invited *Classic Pop* to his management studio in Chelsea to talk about how he's stayed on top for 35 years…

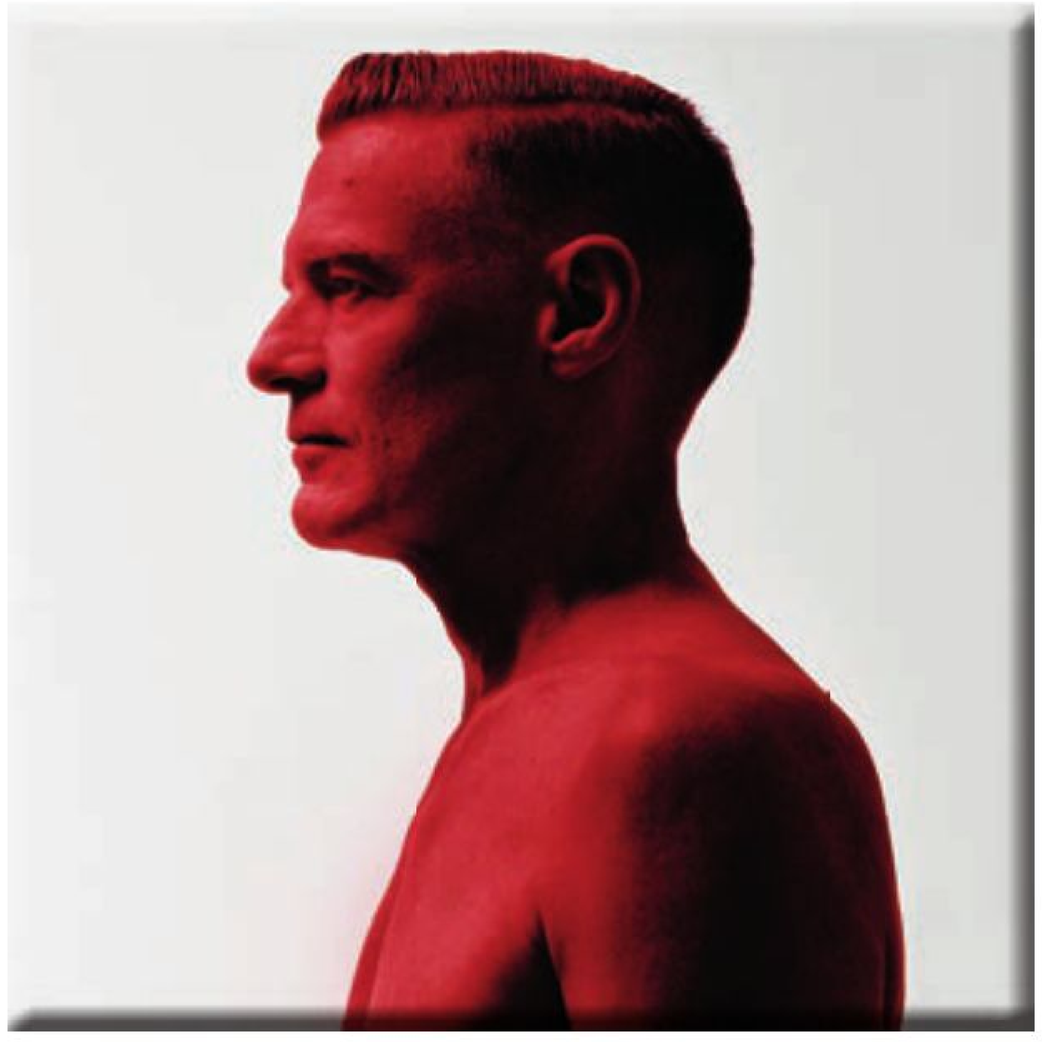
Did you have any grand plans as to how you wanted the new album to sound?
This one wasn't even a question of thinking of an album. I was getting songs together for the *Pretty Woman* musical, which I've co-written with [lifelong writing partner] Jim Vallance. I was parking the ideas for songs that weren't suitable for the musical. Within a year, I started realising I had enough material for an album, so last summer I gathered the last few songs together. I wasn't writing them thinking, "I must write for the musical" – songs just come out how they will. I kept interspersing new and old ideas that had some sort of cohesion. Really, though, *Shine A Light* is simply the best songs I could put together.

How did you decide which songwriters to work with on the album? You've worked with most of them before – Jim Vallance, Eliot Kennedy, Gretchen Peters…
I'm all over the place, so it tends to be whoever's most available and convenient at the time. I started writing *Part Friday Night, Part Sunday Morning* years ago,

"I KEPT INTERSPERSING NEW AND OLD IDEAS THAT HAD SOME SORT OF COHESION. REALLY, THOUGH, SHINE A LIGHT IS SIMPLY THE BEST SONGS I COULD PUT TOGETHER."
BRYAN ADAMS

but I'd never recorded it. I wrote it with Gretchen, but I'd shelved it, thinking maybe it could be good for somebody else to record. The same goes for *The Last Night On Earth*. After I sang *Summer Of '69* with Taylor Swift on her tour, I thought *The Last Night On Earth* could be good for Taylor to work on with me. I just never bothered getting round to asking her! *Driving Under The Influence Of Love* was written for Joe Cocker before he died.

How did you come to write the title track of *Shine A Light* with Ed Sheeran?
It was written as an idea for my parents. I lost my father, and I wanted a song that could be a send-off for him, or for anybody else. The message of *Shine A Light* felt a good way of saying goodbye. Once I'd had the idea, I sent it to Ed and we collaborated back and forth on email. We'd met when we were both in Ireland on tour. I went along to his show, as I had a night off, so we met up and stayed in touch after. I just thought, "I wonder if he'd be up for writing a song with me?" I sent Ed a note, saying, "I've got this idea…" And he went, "Yeah!" I'd love to work with Ed again, he's great. I'd initially presented the song to Jim. I'd written the chorus and parked it. Then I sent it to Jim, asking, "What do you think of this idea?" and he went, "Er… That needs a bit of work." Which was fine, but I always thought it was a good idea. When I then sent it to Ed, he jumped on it. It became that song's time.



Who would you love to write with?
I really love Chris Martin's songwriting, he's a brilliant songwriter.

***I Could Get Used To This* already works superbly in concert – is the secret to songwriting knowing when to use a good "Woo-hoo!" in the chorus?**
Ha! That one actually was written for the musical, for Vivian going "Woo-hoo!" at where she's found herself – she's sitting in the hotel room, in a ton of bubble bath, with Champagne and strawberries waiting. It's an "I could get used to this!" moment.

What was the inspiration for *Part Friday Night, Part Sunday Morning*? Did you have anyone in mind for the woman in the song?
Gretchen sent me the lyric. I was sitting down with my guitar, and the music just came out of me. I like the idea of someone who is morally ethical, but who likes to go out and party. I'm not church – I'm all Friday night most of the time. I'm not Sunday morning at all. If you go to the South in the States, a lot of people are very religious, but they go and get hammered, as if they don't have any moral compass. That idea of, "Let's go out and get wasted, get all sinned up, then head to the church on Sunday to sort myself out!" is great material.

Do you have other songs you have stockpiled that haven't found their moment yet?
I do. The timing is right for certain songs, they sometimes need time to evolve. *The Last Night On Earth* was called something else at first – I can't remember what – and at the last moment I changed the title to something that has more gravitas to it. If I have one regret, it's that back in the 80s I should have put out more albums. I had enough songs to do it, but for some reason I was quite precious about it. I was going, "Not good enough… Not good enough" when I should have put everything out. I should have just gone, "Right, there you go." When I released the 30th anniversary edition of *Reckless*, I added seven songs. I'd forgotten all about them, and then when I heard them again I realised they would have been perfectly fine to go on the radio at the time. My attitude had been, "That's enough, let's focus on just these songs."

How much pressure do you feel under when writing new songs to think they have to live up to the classics before you can play them live?
You always hope a song will be good enough. But, yeah, it's quite difficult to edge a new song into the set, because something has to go. The song quality has to be pretty high for an old favourite to go. You can't be conscious of it when you're writing, though. You just have to do the best job you can on a song.

You didn't write with Jim Vallance from 1989 until *11* in 2008. How is it second time around?
It's funny, it feels exactly the same.

PRETTY WOMAN

WRITING THE MUSIC FOR THIS STAGE VERSION OF THE ROBERTS-GERE CLASSIC WAS A FIRST FOR THE ADAMS-VALLANCE PARTNERSHIP

Based on the classic 1990 rom-com starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere, *Pretty Woman* is the first time Bryan Adams has written for a musical. Bryan and writing partner Jim Vallance have created all its songs.

***Pretty Woman* opened on Broadway in August 2018, and is due to come to the West End next year.**

"I'd heard *Pretty Woman* was happening, so I just put my name forward," says Bryan of how he came to be involved. "It was one of the quickest turnarounds in my career – the producer called me back straight away, saying, 'You want to do it? Great! Come and meet the director,' and it went smoothly from there."

Bryan has written regularly for movies, which gave him a headstart in writing for a musical. "Having all that experience in films really helped," he explains. "When you're writing a song with a narrative, you know the story is going to take you down a few rabbit holes. So you just have to go for it."

Bryan says he would write another musical "in a heartbeat," but is much less enthusiastic about the idea of a musical based on his own songs. He says: "That's something that has been put to me before, but I'm not interested. Certainly not right now. I'd rather do something new."

Bryan closes his current live shows with a string of acoustic covers
© Bryan Adams

"I'M NOT CHURCH – I'M ALL FRIDAY NIGHT MOST OF THE TIME. IF YOU GO TO THE SOUTH IN THE STATES, A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE VERY RELIGIOUS, BUT THEY GO AND GET HAMMERED."

BRYAN ADAMS

18+

WHAT IS

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"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HAPPY WITH MY VOICE. THAT'S ALWAYS WHAT HAS GOT ME THROUGH. THE VOICE IS WHAT'S KEPT ME IN HOT FOOD AND SHOES."

BRYAN ADAMS

There's a strange familiarity with me and Jim. He's very clever, competent and witty, all the things I like in a collaborator. We never really stayed out of touch, though. There's a time for everything when it comes to working together professionally. Jim is a seriously good musician. Every song we write is different for how we divide up the workload, but that spontaneity is one of the things I like about working with Jim. Sometimes, it can be the simplest thing. If you take *I Can Get Used To This*, when we were writing it for *Pretty Woman*, I phoned Jim and said, "I don't know what she needs to say in this scene, it needs to be something like, 'Wow, I could get used to this!'" And Jim went, "Well, that's good! 'I could get used to this' – that's it, there it is!" The song came together from that moment. Jim is good at simplifying things.

Bob Rock produced most of the new album. You've worked with him before, and he's produced everyone from Bon Jovi and Metallica to Michael Bublé. Why is he so good?

He's an enthusiast, great at pulling things together. He's a great taskmaster, he'll go, "What else you got? What else you got? What else you got?" He'll keep repeating, "What else you got?" until we crack it. He'll spend all day cutting tracks until we get the magic. Mostly the vocals are live on this record, too – most of those new songs have vocals that are recorded live with the band.

Bryan Adams in the 1980s, a decade when it was socially acceptable to wear a vest in public

How did Jennifer Lopez come on board to sing on *That's How Strong Our Love Is*?

I just asked her manager if she'd be on the song and she said yes, simple as that.

Your publishing firm is called Badams – Badams & J-Lo is a good name for a crime-fighting duo.

(Laughs) It really is. Watch out, punks, Badams & J-Lo are coming for you!

What was the hardest song to get right on *Shine A Light*?

LIFE THRU A LENS

BEING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL POP STARS ISN'T BRYAN ADAMS' ONLY JOB…

Since the 90s, Bryan has enjoyed a second career as a respected photographer. His work has been featured in a host of fashion magazines, as well as campaigns for labels from Hugo Boss and Montblanc to Fred Perry and Converse.

Bryan has photographed Mick Jagger, while his portrait of Amy Winehouse was used as the sleeve of her posthumous album, *Lioness: Hidden Treasures*.

In 2002, Bryan even photographed the Queen, with the image used on stamps in Canada in 2004 and 2005. His photo of the Queen and Prince Philip is on display at London's National Portrait Gallery.

As well as the famous, Bryan's photography has highlighted the plight of injured soldiers, notably in his 2013 book *Wounded: The Legacy Of War*.

Another of Bryan's photography books, *Untitled* from 2015, is a series of abstract images of black sand. His most recent collection was published in 2017. *Canadians* marks the 150th anniversary of Canadian independence. Notable Canadians Bryan shot for the book include Joni Mitchell, The Weeknd, *The Handmaid's Tale* author Margaret Atwood and Linda Evangelista.

Funnily enough, it'd be *That's How Strong Our Love Is*. Johan Carlsson, the producer, has worked with big pop acts like Ariana Grande and Little Mix. You're singing to the computer the whole time. It's different to how I usually do it, but I was interested in trying it, because I wanted a more contemporary sound. Any time in the studio, it's always enjoyable. I don't think I've ever had a bad experience. Well, there was one time with Mutt Lange in the studio. We were really struggling to get the sound right and he said, "You need to take a break." He thought my voice was gone, but it turned out it was the microphone that was fried, not me. I'd sung for four hours on a blown mic. That's the only time it's been frustrating. There's a version of *That's How Strong Our Love Is* on the vinyl edition of the album where it's done more regularly, with my band. I think it's a really interesting contrast.

Rocking it on stage at Wembley Arena, 27 February 2019

© Gatty Images

Your recent Wembley Arena show was the 29th time you played there. But you had the enthusiasm of a newcomer – you're still fresh when playing *Run To You*, *Summer Of '69* or the other classics again...
If a song is in the set, then you have to play it as good as it can be. I'm not going to downgear just because I've played a song a lot. I can't even think that small. The record is the template, and anything below that is sub-par. It's why the musicianship is so high in my band, because those guys deliver on a big level. They're never going to play a lesser version of the song just because it's older. Who does that? If you make music, make it as great as you can.

When you and Jim first started writing together, did you know he'd be The One who you'd have such a great writing relationship with?
Jim had a great track record for a young musician in Vancouver, and there weren't many people with that kind of pedigree. I'd done studio work, so I knew about Jim. But he was hiding behind an alias, Rodney Higgs, for his songwriting. I hadn't twigged he was the same guy. So when I met Jim, I only knew him as a session drummer. My friend introduced me, saying, "This is Jim, who wrote such-and-such." I went, "No, that was Rodney Higgs!" When I realised Jim was the same guy and so twice as talented as I thought, I said, "We should definitely write together!" And the next day we wrote a song.

© Bryan Adams

You and Jim started writing in what were apparently grim surroundings.
Yeah, it was a basement full of cat piss. Sure.

You and Jim were writing songs for artists like Kiss and Bonnie Raitt while waiting for your career as a performer to take off. Would you have been happy staying as a songwriter for hire?
I don't know how long I would have lasted as just a songwriter. We had a good crack at writing songs for other people. But it was because of some of the breaks I got doing that which meant I was able to convince a label to sign me as a performer. One thing came with the other, really. I needed to establish myself as a songwriter, and from there it made things look a lot better for a record company to trust that I could make it as a singer. Really, though, there's no replacement for getting out and playing. No matter how good a song is, you have to get out in front of an audience. When I look back at my first record [1980's *Bryan Adams*], it's really a glorified demo. It wasn't until my second album, *You Want It You Got It*, where I'd taken what I'd written out on tour and practised those songs that I got better arrangements and a better sound for myself. Just writing in the studio, I was too insulated.

Bearing in mind your love of performing, do you see yourself as a songwriter who sings or a singer who writes songs?
Now, I'm a singer who writes songs. Back then, I was just a busker. I've always been happy with my voice. That's always what has got me through. The voice is what's kept me in hot food and shoes.

You told during the recent tour of how your mother agreed to use your college fund to buy you a piano instead so you could write songs. What would have happened if she'd insisted you go to college?
It was too late for that, she would never have said it by then. Maybe she would

PLANTING THE SEEDS

VEGANISM MAY BE FASHIONABLE NOW, BUT BRYAN ADAMS HAS BEEN SHUNNING MEAT AND DAIRY FOR OVER THREE DECADES...

As well as photography, Bryan's other notable passion outside music is his vegan lifestyle.

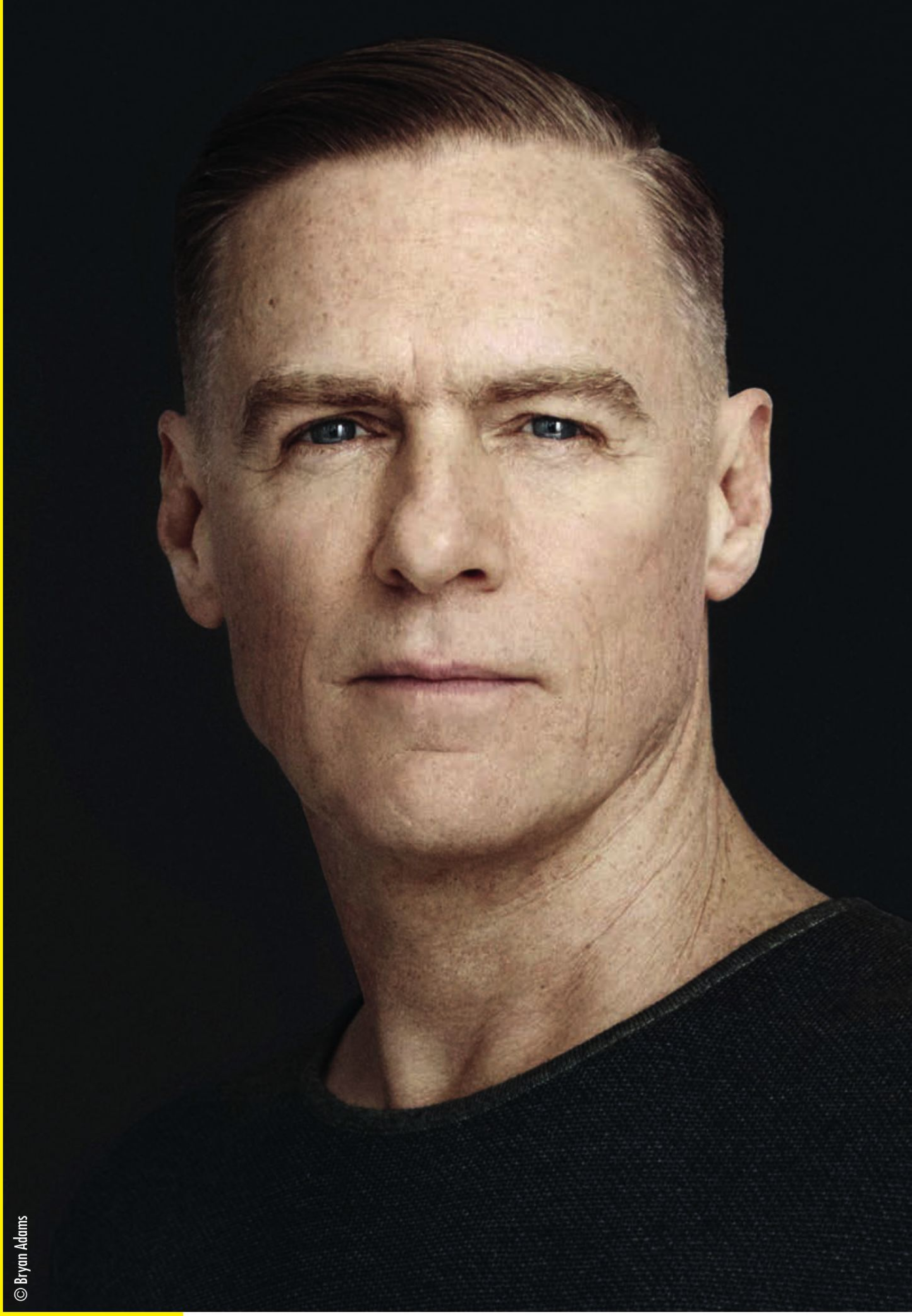
Bryan became a vegetarian nearly 40 years ago, and has been vegan since 1983. "I wish I'd been vegan my whole life," he told *Vegan Life* in 2018.

Having become vegetarian on learning of factory farming of animals, Bryan initially struggled to cut out dairy products and was still a fan of pizzas in particular.

But he says: "I'm not a preacher, I simply have my view on what works for me. It'd be wonderful for me to convince people without having to say much – for example, I'm very slim due to my diet."

Bryan's championing of animal rights also led him to be an advocate for the PETA charity. "They use humour very well to engage with a wide number of people," Bryan has said. Having been healthily vegan for so long, Bryan is particularly angry about the way in which claims that the vegan diet is unsustainable because it lacks protein is often repeated.

Adams wrote on Instagram in January: "Don't believe the meat industry propaganda that, if you're eating animals and fish, you're eating protein. All foods need to be turned into amino acids in your stomach before your body turns them into proteins. If you're eating fresh vegetables and salad, your body naturally finds what it needs and expels the rest."



© Bryan Adams

FACT BOMB! Both of Bryan Adams' parents were British. Conrad and Elizabeth Adams emigrated to Canada from Plymouth in the 1950s.

have said, "Let's hold out and see how you go." But my mother wasn't resistant, because she was open to the idea of my creativity. By then, I'd started to pay my rent through music. I was doing sessions and I'd done a couple of years on tour. I wasn't that successful, but she could see that I could do it. By then, it was about helping me to do the right thing.

Who did you see as your peers in the 80s?

The Who. I was a big Pete Townshend fan, and I found out he's really nice. I like my heavy rock, so you're talking about guys like Queen, Paul Rodgers, Deep Purple, the Zeppelin guys. They were the musicians I'd looked up to when I was starting out, and they were still going in the 80s.

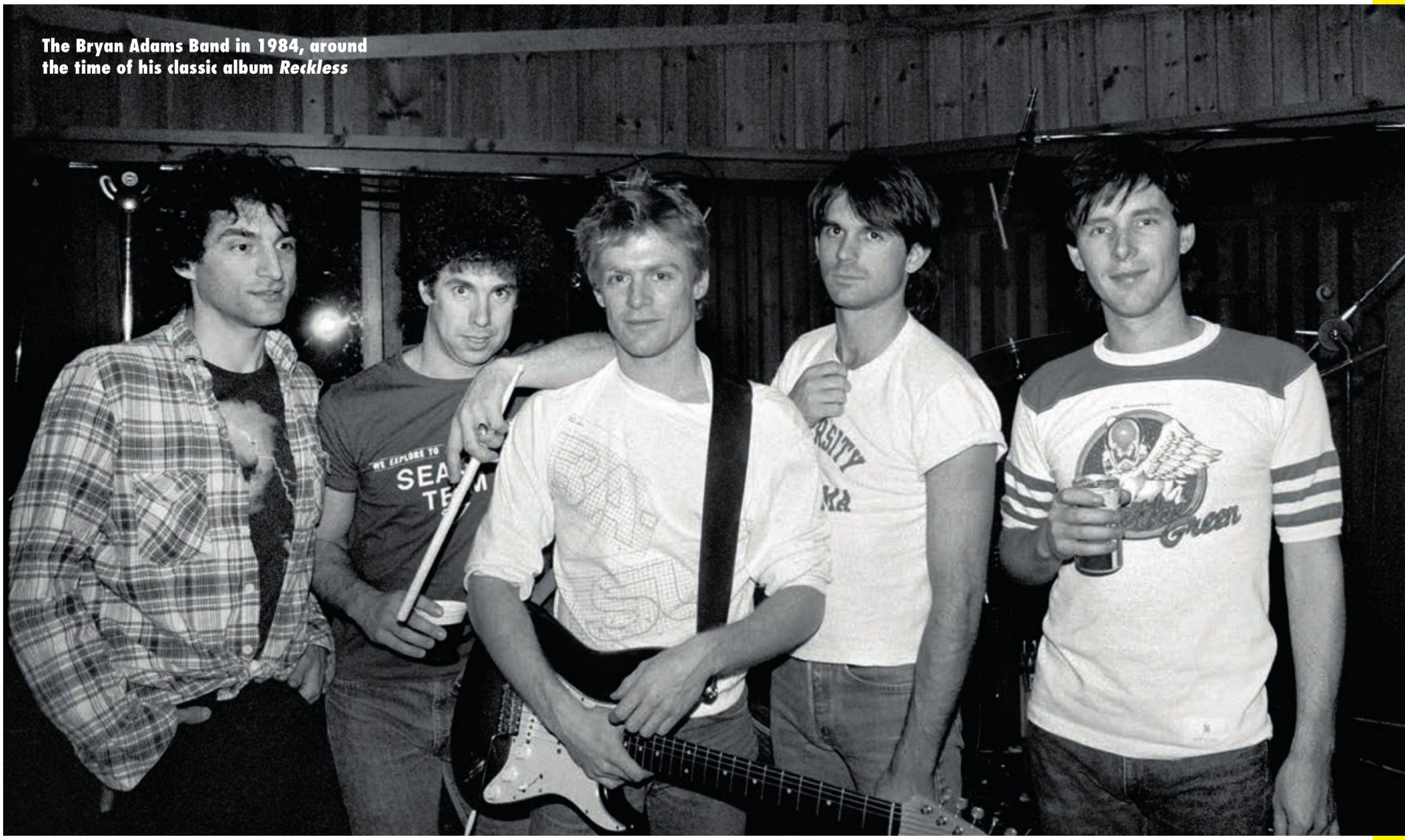
When was the last time you had a bad show?

Hmm. I did an acoustic show last year I didn't love that much, but that was because it was a private concert. They didn't want the band, they just wanted me acoustically. I did it, but it was… odd, that's all I can say. Actually, it wasn't that bad, because at least it was quite funny. There aren't really any terrible gigs, just different ones.

When you played *Can't Stop This Thing We Started* on the recent tour, the big screen video was of you walking through a shopping centre, being amiably mobbed. How did that come about?

I didn't like the backdrop video we'd had for the song. I said to the crew, "Come on, let's get in the van and go to the shopping centre." We filmed it on my keyboard player Gary's son's iPhone. He followed me walking through, and I'd said, "Anyone who comes up to me, just keep filming." It's a typical reaction if I go shopping, I guess. Though it was in Toronto, and people will recognise me there. I get totally involved in every single one of the big screen videos. The only one I didn't was for *Go Down Rockin'*, where I just asked the crew to sort some pictures of me falling.

You had fun with the self-portrait on the cover of *Shine A Light* before you went on stage – there were animations of that photo which reminded me of Terry Gilliam's Monty Python work...



The Bryan Adams Band in 1984, around the time of his classic album *Reckless*

OK, that's cool, thank you. I always try to have fun with my gig visuals. I like taking the piss out of myself – I'll do anything to lighten the atmosphere before I come on. I just wanted to try to animate this serious picture of me, to make it more humorous. I wish I could do that with the album cover itself!

Do you approach songs for films differently than if they're specifically for one of your albums?
That's why I like writing for films – there's a narrative, and all you have to do is find a way of making that story turn into a melody. I really enjoy that.

***(Everything I Do) I Do It For You* was written for the film *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves*. Is it true it was a really quick song to write?**
Yeah, 45 minutes. I knew it was a good song right away. I feel great about that song, it's one of the reasons I'm still out there. It's always worked live, so I enjoy singing it. It's one you can't replace in the show, you'd be really hard-pressed to leave that one out.

How pleased are you it's still got the record for having 16 weeks at No.1? It looked like Drake's *One Dance* might have beaten it a couple of years ago...
I don't think about it. If Drake had beaten me, I wouldn't have cared. Someone will beat me one day, but who cares?

"I ALWAYS TRY TO HAVE FUN WITH MY GIG VISUALS. I LIKE TAKING THE PISS OUT OF MYSELF – I'LL DO ANYTHING TO LIGHTEN THE ATMOSPHERE BEFORE I COME ON."
BRYAN ADAMS

Having written the *Pretty Woman* musical, could you imagine yourself writing a novel or maybe a film?
If it was a clever enough story, but I know my limitations. I've never thought, "That song could work as 250 pages", because I'm lucky if I get through one page.

What about your autobiography?
I've written the odd page, thinking I might do it. But I get to the bottom of the first page and think, "Oh God, who wants to read this? It's so boring!" So I don't continue. I just don't find myself inclined to write about myself. I don't think the journey is complete. Maybe one day, but it doesn't feel time yet.

Having used some songs you'd stockpiled away like *Part Friday Night, Part Sunday Morning* for this record, is there any material left over that you'll take into your next album?
Probably not. I really dug down for this record and put out the best songs that I had available. But I'm already brewing songs for my next album. I've got a folder of new songs I've been writing, and I'm starting to think about when to go in and do it. Those new songs are sounding pretty good already.

You turn 60 in November. Does that feel like a milestone?
I'm not 60 yet, so I don't know. I'll let you know when I get there.

But can you see 60 on the horizon?
Only because you keep bringing it up! (Laughs)

In the new song *Don't Look Back*, you sing about someone who has trouble finding a happy ending. Have you always believed in happy endings?
I don't believe in endings at all. I just prefer to keep going. Sure, everything has to come to an end, but I try to keep it all going. I don't want it to end. Let's keep the journey going, that's my attitude. ■

● ***Shine A Light* is out now on Polydor Records.**

THE LOW DOWN

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

FEATURING A GOBBY FRONTMAN WITH THE THEATRICAL NOUS OF JIM MORRISON, A FRANK SINATRA CROON AND LEONARD COHEN'S MELANCHOLIC SENSIBILITY, ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN FORGED GRANDIOSE SOUNDSCAPES OUT OF PUNK ENERGY AND POP POETRY TO LEAVE AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE 80S…

DAVID BURKE

The Liverpool scene at the interface of the 70s and 80s was the proving ground for a trio of singers that are among the most mercurial ever to emerge from the Merseyside metropolis. Ian McCulloch, Julian Cope and Pete Wylie actually started out together as The Crucial Three in 1977, before Wylie quit (going on to The Mighty Wah!) and McCulloch and Cope went on to form A Shallow Madness, an early incarnation of The Teardrop Explodes.

When Cope sacked McCulloch, the self-styled 'Mac The Mouth' hooked up with Will Sergeant, Sergeant's school buddy Les Pattinson, and a drum machine. The latter was replaced by Trinidadian Pete de Freitas on their debut album, *Crocodiles*, in 1980. The second album, *Heaven Up Here*, released a year later, was more expansive, more experimental than its predecessor, and broke the Top 10, despite the single, *A Promise*, only registering at No. 49.

The band's third long-player, *Porcupine*, was initially rejected by WEA for not being commercial enough. The Bunnymen agreed to re-record it, recruiting Indian-born American violinist L Shankar to add strings on a number of tracks, including *The Back Of Love* and *The Cutter*, their first Top 10 hit in 1983.

Fast-forward a year to what is arguably Echo & The Bunnymen's magnum opus, *Ocean Rain* – indeed, the promo campaign was anchored by a quote from McCulloch, never a master of the understatement, describing it as "the greatest album ever made". Most of it was recorded with a 35-piece orchestra in Paris, augmented by further sessions in Liverpool and Bath. According to Sergeant: "It's all pretty dark". He wasn't wrong, but it didn't matter – with *Ocean Rain*, the Bunnymen became music immortals, confirming their place in the gloomier recesses of British pop.

Of course, it couldn't last. McCulloch quit the group in 1988, de Freitas was killed in a motorcycle accident the following year, and, after an ill-fated attempt at carrying on with a new vocalist (Noel Burke), Sergeant and Pattinson pulled the plug in 1993.

The Bunnymen reformed in 1997, though only McCulloch and Sergeant remain of the original line-up.

THE MUST-HAVE ALBUMS

CROCODILES

1980

The drum machine gives way

By the time Echo & The Bunnymen released their debut album, the drum machine had been replaced by Pete de Freitas. Moody and mysterious, *Crocodiles* was produced by Bill Drummond (who was "almost a fifth member" of the band, according to Ian McCulloch) and Dave Balfe of The Teardrop Explodes, with Ian Broudie (later of The Lightning Seeds) assisting. The Doors influence is audible on the dirge-like *The Pictures On My Wall*, while PiL and The Elevators are other reference points on the likes of *Monkeys* and the title track. Mac remembered the sessions at Rockfield Studios near Monmouth and London's Eden Studios with something approximating fondness. "I can't recall any arguments," he pondered. "Maybe it was because we were so young, but it was brilliant." The reviews weren't bad either, with David Fricke of *Rolling Stone* gushing about McCulloch's "apocalyptic brooding, combining Jim Morrison-style psychosexual yells, a flair for David Bowie-like vocal inflections and the nihilistic bark of his punk peers into a disturbing portrait of the singer as a young neurotic". *Crocodiles* peaked at No. 17 in the UK chart.

HEAVEN UP HERE

1981

The ambitious second album

Hugh Jones was promoted from engineer to producer on the Bunnymen's not-so-difficult second album, which went on to win Best Album and Best Dressed LP accolades at the *NME* Awards, and has a place in *Rolling Stone*'s list of the 500 greatest albums of all time, despite the band's modest success Stateside. *Heaven Up Here* is darker still than its predecessor, a glorious document of existential sadness – hardly surprising, given that Ian McCulloch had the The Velvet Underground's *What Goes On* playing on a loop in his head throughout the recording. He accused Will Sergeant of being a control freak on the sessions and described *Heaven Up Here* as being the guitarist's album. Sergeant himself said: "We wanted classic sounds, sounds nobody else could get. I played guitar with a pair of scissors at one point, and I kind of banned cymbals." Together with Les Pattinson and Pete de Freitas, Sergeant would visit African music shops in search of instruments to devise a new rhythmic language. According to Pattinson: "It was all about not being scared to try things." *Heaven Up Here* reached No. 10 in the UK.

PORCUPINE

1983

Who's "uncommercial" now?

WEA rejected the original version of Echo & the Bunnymen's third album for being "too uncommercial". Despite Will Sergeant's objections, they returned to the studio and re-recorded it. These sessions spawned hit singles *The Cutter* and *The Back Of Love*, both featuring American violinist L Shankar on strings (Sergeant had Shankar suggest the melody from Cat Stevens' 1967 hit, *Matthew And Son*, on *The Cutter*). Reflecting on the saga years later, Ian McCulloch claimed the band were "pissed off" when Bill Drummond "went in and sneakily remixed *The Back Of Love* and (Dave) Balfe put a keyboard thing on *The Cutter*". Whatever their retrospective reservations, there were no objections from the Bunnymen when they were flogging 45s by the shedload. McCulloch claimed *Porcupine* was "a classic autobiographical album, the most honest thing that I'd ever written or sung". Though he did go on to say: "I found the material really heavy to play – really oppressive. That's the only reason I didn't like the album. The songs were great, but it didn't make me happy." A No. 2 placing on the UK chart undoubtedly proved a balm to Mac's woes.

OCEAN RAIN

1984

"The greatest album ever made"

Considered by many critics and fans alike to be the Bunnymen's apotheosis, *Ocean Rain* was hailed (with typical bombast) by Ian McCulloch himself as "the greatest album ever made". The band decamped to Paris for the recording with an orchestra, soaking their lush melodies in sumptuous strings, while elsewhere there were contributions from xylophones, glockenspiels and congas. It's variously dramatic, dynamic and deliciously doom-laden, packed with lofty ambition, but fully realised. Mac was the one who suggested Paris: "To me, I was the greatest singer in the world, never shied away from bigging myself up. I told the label, 'Imagine how much better and inspired I'll be if we were in France?'" The real gold on *Ocean Rain* can be found on *The Killing Moon*, the first single. Les Pattinson recalled, "Me and Will (Sergeant) had been in Russia for a holiday, and there was this band playing balalaikas in a hotel foyer, real cheesy cabaret. But it was fantastic. We just started messing about and the next thing is we've got a chorus for *The Killing Moon*." The album was the Bunnymen's first to break the Billboard Top 100 in the US.

AND THE REST...

Echo & The Bunnymen

1987

Echo & The Bunnymen's eponymously titled fifth album (it was originally supposed to be titled *The Game*) would be their last for 10 years and also their final outing with drummer Pete de Freitas, who died two years later in a motorcycle accident, at the age of 27. It was produced by Laurie Latham in Germany, Belgium, London and Liverpool after an aborted attempt at recording with Gil Norton, and sounds like a band on autopilot. The strings are supplanted by excessive keyboards, the verve capitulates to ennui and the songs are just plain dull. Ironically, *Echo & the Bunnymen* (frequently referred to as "the grey album", though McCulloch prefers "the 'loss of grey matter' album") gave them their biggest success in America. But Mac wasn't alone in wondering, "Where was the Bunnymen we all loved?"

Evergreen

1997

The comeback album after the 1990 Noel Burke-fronted *Reverberation* in the wake of Ian McCulloch's departure and the band's dissolution in 1993. Mac had reached burnout, needed fresh impetus and wanted to work with his old muckers again. The reunion was "like a new lease of life", according to Les Pattinson. Anchoring a robust set is the single *Nothing Lasts Forever*, described by McCulloch as "the most important song I've ever written" and featuring backing vocals by Liam Gallagher. And the strings were back – Adam Peters, who had worked on *Ocean Rain*, wrote the arrangements for the London Metropolitan Orchestra. Understated and sublime, *Evergreen* is a triumphant return for the Bunnymen's founding members, McCulloch, Will Sergeant and Pattinson, though it would also represent the bassist's swansong.

Siberia

2005

With Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant now the fulcrum of the band, Hugh Jones was back behind the desk on *Siberia* – an album some say was Echo & the Bunnymen's best since *Ocean Rain* (even though it didn't trouble the charts) and a personal favourite of Mac's ("better than *Porcupine*, and I prefer it to *Heaven Up Here*"). There's a contemplative tone about the collection, especially on *Parthenon Drive*, and echoes of once-upon-a-time modest greatness (*All Because Of You Days* and *Everything Kills You*). *Siberia* is also where Mac confronts his depression in a more overt way than before. Sergeant's guitar is very much front and centre on this album – there are an estimated 90 different guitar parts, most of them doubled – and it's this, according to McCulloch, that gives *Siberia* "more bollocks" than its predecessor, 2001's *Flowers*.

Meteorites

2014

Echo & the Bunnymen's most recent release was produced by Youth, formerly of Killing Joke, who also plays bass, and Andrea Wright. Ian McCulloch wrote several of the songs on bass guitar; four of them were finished in a day. "It sounds so different. I wasn't thinking chordally or the way I was used to writing songs, but by doing this it reminded me of Talking Heads. It reminded me of our early Bunnymen stuff, that kind of pulse," he said. The title, according to Mac, was indicative of "what Echo And The Bunnymen mean and are meant to be – up there in heaven, untouchable, celestial, beautiful and real", and the sleeve design features the Zagami meteorite, a 40lb rock all the way from Mars. A solid rather than spectacular addition to their oeuvre, *Meteorites* still possesses moments of grandeur, not least on *New Horizons*.

THE ESSENTIAL SINGLES

THE BACK OF LOVE

1982

On the chopping block

First aired as part of Echo & The Bunnymen's fourth John Peel Session on BBC Radio 1, *The Back Of Love* was originally titled *Taking Advantage*. The single version, produced by Ian Broudie (under the pseudonym Kingbird) at Trident Studios, London, in early 1982, and featuring L Shankar on strings, gave the band their first Top 20 hit – just, at No. 19. By the time it appeared on *Porcupine* the following year, the track had been remixed by manager Bill Drummond, much to Ian McCulloch's chagrin. The enigma that is McCulloch sings about being in the grip of both self-doubt and selfism over a strident riff that segues into a swoonsome chorus. The flipside of the 45 – the sleeve of which reproduces Henry Scott Tuke's painting, *The Promise*, from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool – is *The Subject*, while the 12" version added *Fuel*.

THE CUTTER

1983

Spare us

Porcupine was recorded at three locations, Rockfield, Trident and at Amazon in Liverpool and the atmosphere on the recording sessions was, to coin a euphemism, fraught – or, as Les Pattinson put it rather more bluntly, "There was no diplomacy in the band. It was either all-out war, or you just shut up and became a dummy." Ian McCulloch had an idea for *The Cutter*, played it for producer Ian Broudie and asked him to pretend he'd been the source. Why? "Because if I showed it to Will (Sergeant) and that, they'd say they didn't want it. There was a lot of hiding stuff because I couldn't be doing with them thinking there was a one-man conspiracy going on." Oh, dear. The song itself is a perfect union of East and West, L Shankar's strings igniting Mac's pleas to "Spare us the cutter" on a melody that is relentlessly spellbinding.

THE KILLING MOON

1984

Fate up against your will

The greatest song ever written, according to the reliably modest Mr McCulloch – "about everything, from birth to death to eternity and God. It contains the answer to the meaning of life." So all that existential angst has been for nothing? Mac wrote the lyric quickly, almost unconsciously, played David Bowie's *Space Oddity* backwards, then fiddled about with the chords. From Will Sergeant's point of view, it was a trip to Russia "that fed into *The Killing Moon*". He and Les Pattinson returned home inspired by balalaika bands, hence the "rumbling, mandolin-style bass thing" you can hear. "During the recording we went for a curry round the corner, and when we came back, the producer had found this twangy thing on tape that I'd done while tuning the guitar," he happily admitted. "It became the best-known guitar line in our entire catalogue."

SEVEN SEAS

1984

Painting the whole world blue

Let's face it, Echo & The Bunnymen don't often do frivolous. If they were a film, they'd be arthouse black and white, austere and aloof. *Seven Seas* represents their nod to the mainstream, their embrace of primary colours, shot through with a strain of surrealism. It's a nursery rhyme, a fairytale, a cryptic love song, beguilingly beautiful – or beautifully beguiling, if you prefer. Favourite fingers, cavemen singing, fresher feeling, burning bridges, smashing mirrors – all strange life is here, as Ian McCulloch pronounces proudly, gladly on the refrain, "Seven seas/ Swimming them so well/ Glad to see/ My face among them/ Kissing the tortoise shell". It's the Bunnymen's feelgood number, light relief from the portentousness. The single was flanked by a live cover of fellow Liverpudlians The Beatles' *All You Need Is Love*. Too much happy on one disc!

BRING ON THE DANCING HORSES

1985

From Russia with sagacity

The only new single to be included on Echo & The Bunnymen's singles compilation *Songs To Learn & Sing*, *Bring On The Dancing Horses* is a Russian proverb, a rough translation of which suggests that when things fall apart, why not have a bit of the circus in there as well? Like *Seven Seas*, it's the Bunnymen at play with both words and melody. "Jimmy Brown/ Made of stone/ Charlie Clown/ No way home", Ian McCulloch intones over shimmering guitars and a heavenly harp. One writer, Aaron Franz, reckons it's "about the alchemical process. It's alluding to the present phase of the Great Work, which is an ages-long process of human progress/ evolution." Wonder if Mac knows that?

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER

1997

Northern soul brothers

Ian McCulloch had *Nothing Lasts Forever* in his locker "in various forms" since 1990. When he presented it to Will Sergeant and Les Pattinson, their reaction wasn't what he'd hoped for. "Will said, 'It's a bit pretty', and I thought, 'You f***ing idiot, that's like calling *The Killing Moon* a bit beautiful'. To me, it's the most important song I've ever written, because it takes me back to being taken seriously, and it's one of the best songs of all time." Oasis were in the studio next door, working on *Be Here Now*. "Liam came in and listened to it, and he had ideas for tambourine and a backing vocal, and we thought, yeah, we're having that. He was spot on. It really made that song great."

ONLY FOR THE BRAVE

Reverberation

1990

Following the departure of McCulloch and the death of de Freitas, Sergeant and Pattinson assembled a new line-up for the sixth album, featuring ex-St Vitus Dance frontman Noel Burke. Proof, if it were needed, that Mac was indispensable.

What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?

1999

One review said it had "all the appeal of a discussion with a career advisor", while Sergeant claimed it was McCulloch and their manager "doing something that didn't involve anyone else".

SHHH NEED TO KNOW

● A popular misconception is that the 'Echo' in Echo & The Bunnymen was the name of the drum machine used when they started out. Guitarist Will Sergeant explained: "We had this mate who kept suggesting all these names like The Daz Men, or Glycerol And The Fan Extractors. Echo & the Bunnymen was one of them. I thought it was just as stupid as the rest."

● On their 1978 debut at Eric's Club in Liverpool, Echo & the Bunnymen played a 20-minute version of *Monkeys*, which was entitled *I Bagsy Yours* at the time.

● Echo & The Bunnymen songs are much favoured by those who compile film soundtracks. *Bring On The Dancing Horses* features in the movie *Pretty In Pink*, while *The Killing Moon* can be heard in *Grosse Pointe Blank* and *Donnie Darko*, and their cover of The Doors' *People Are Strange* pops up in *The Lost Boys*.

● In 1994, a year after Echo & The Bunnymen disbanded, Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant released *Burned* under the moniker Electrafixion. "I didn't want to go headlong into the Bunnymen," said Mac.

THE MUST-WATCH VIDEOS

THE CUTTER

Director: Bill Butt

With the recording of *Porcupine* completed at the end of 1982, Echo & the Bunnymen played a free show before 20,000 adoring fans in Liverpool's Sefton Park before flying to Iceland for *The Cutter* shoot. The band's lighting engineer, Bill Butt, was delegated to direct. He wanted the video to reflect the frigid feel of the album and originally plumped for Scotland as the location, but the paucity of snow meant Reykjavik was the second choice. Filming took place near the frozen Gullfoss waterfall, and was perilous: "If we had slipped there wasn't anything for hundreds of feet below us," McCulloch recalled. Photographer Brian Griffin, also on the trip, said the sun hardly appeared, and that "to walk, stand up or just think seemed a massive effort". The beautiful, barren imagery is spliced with a performance of the track, with Mac looking suitably, erm, cool.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgPSpVUg0iM

THE KILLING MOON

Director: Anton Corbijn

A ghostly wind soundtracks the rippling image of a crescent moon reflected in water. A hooded figure stands sentinel-like on the deck of a ship, its sails shimmering – the whole vibe portentous. It's John Carpenter's *The Fog*! And then McCulloch, beneath a see-sawing lightshade moon, his face alternating between the light and the dark, impish and impossibly gorgeous (those lips), delivers his homily – "*The Killing Moon* is more than just a song. It's a psalm, almost hymnal," he said in 2015 – remote as a spirit child spinning through the cosmos. There's a subtle bleeding quality in the colours that illustrate the video, the crimson and the black particularly accentuated, compounding that sense of the spectral, the spooky unknown. It's all wonderfully mad and compelling and ambivalent, adding pretty much zilch to a lyric that is both poetic and philosophical.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWz0JC7afNQ

SEVEN SEAS

Director: Anton Corbijn

Dutch photographer and director Anton Corbijn – whose signature style is austere black and white – gets in touch with his alter ego on *Seven Seas*, a sort of cut-up homage to Echo & the Bunnymen's home city. Ian McCulloch swims across a music-hall stage, hailing the Royal Liver Building – symbol of the magical Merseyside metropolis – with each stroke, the red of his beloved Liverpool FC a regular backdrop. Pete de Freitas has his head in the *Liverpool Echo*, while Will Sergeant and Les Pattinson, inexplicably, appear as penguins. A tinfoiled fish figure could be a nod of the influence exerted by Captain Beefheart's *Trout Mask Replica*. There are references, too, to Hamburg and the Star-Club, where The Beatles served their apprenticeship, and to Corbijn's native Netherlands, as well as Venice and Morocco. As daft and delightful as the song itself.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbYxP11rbSM

LIPS LIKE SUGAR

Director: Anton Corbijn

Ian McCulloch's lips could have had a career of their own – come on, they're every bit the equal of French actress Béatrice Dalle's. Haven't you seen *Betty Blue*? Mac's mouth is the indisputable star of the video for *Lips Like Sugar*, another collaboration with Anton Corbijn, this one drawing heavily on the photographer/director's minimalist, grainy black-and-white motifs. The video is predominantly based on footage of the band performing the song, yet somehow Corbijn manages to infuse this standard trope of the promo tool with the raw sensuality of the track itself. It's all about the irresistible chemistry between McCulloch and the camera. By the end, we've been transported from the sound studio to a garish set straight out of *Star Trek*, where the Bunnymen are hunted by a couple of women in lurid space suits. Who said they don't have a sense of humour?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hGcJA8fXvU

A ghostly wind soundtracks the rippling image of a crescent moon reflected in water. A hooded figure stands sentinel-like on the deck of a ship, its sails shimmering… it's all wonderfully mad and compelling and ambivalent

WHAT'S NEXT?

Echo & The Bunnymen continue to record and tour, though only Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant remain from the original line-up. Their last album, 2014's *Meteorites*, was very much McCulloch's project – he contributed guitar, bass and percussion on the recordings, and also worked on the song arrangements. "I had been thinking of taking five years off on an island, but suddenly all these songs came from nowhere. It's about my personal journey and rebirth," he explained at the time – before, with trademark swagger, declaring himself to be "writing soliloquies up there with Shakespeare". When it comes to the stage, Mac and Sergeant perform with a band of hired hands, filling out modestly sized venues in both Europe and the United States last year. While there are seemingly no immediate plans for new music, Ian McCulloch is booked to embark on a solo trek around the UK in 2017, beginning at The Sage, Gateshead, on 8 April.

MAC AND SERGEANT PERFORM WITH A BAND OF HIRED HANDS, FILLING OUT MODESTLY SIZED VENUES IN EUROPE AND THE US LAST YEAR

LISTEN UP!

Welcome to our hand-picked Echo & The Bunnymen Spotify playlist, all ready cued-up for your delectation and delight. Exhaustive? Well, no, that would be an impossible task in a mere 20 tracks… but representative? We'd like to think so, and we're confident that by the end you'll be reminded of the Liverpudlians' genius…

1. The Killing Moon
Their finest moment

2. The Cutter
East meets West

3. The Back Of Love
The one that broke the Bunnymen

4. Seven Seas
Psychedelic nursery rhyme

5. Nothing Lasts Forever
With Liam Gallagher on BVs

6. Bring On The Dancing Horses
An artistic triumph

7. Ocean Rain
Heaven-sent strings

8. Silver
Sgt. Pepper? Who he?

9. Lips Like Sugar
The grey album's gold

10. Villiers Terrace
Garage-band futurism

11. Do It Clean
The Bunnymen rock out

12. Over the Wall
File under 'world music'

13. Rescue
It's all about the riff

14. Going Up
Perfect opening gambit on debut

15. Show Of Strength
Will Sergeant makes it soar

16. My Kingdom
Slayed by the chorus

17. The Puppet
The lost single

18. Never Stop
The Bunnymen get political

19. People Are Strange
Mac morphs into Jim Morrison

20. Stormy Weather
Reprising the 80s glory years

http://spoti.fi/2hFw36C

SIMPLE MINDS

STREET FIGHTING MEN

WITH SIMPLE MINDS' 1989 ALBUM STREET FIGHTING YEARS ALBUM GETTING THE REISSUE TREATMENT AND A NEW STUDIO LP HARKING BACK TO THEIR DANCEY ROOTS TAKING SHAPE, JIM KERR AND CHARLIE BURCHILL TELL JOHN EARLS ABOUT PANIC ATTACKS, NUCLEAR SUBMARINES, LOU REED'S UNLIKELIEST ADDICTION AND ONE OF THE MOST BIZARRE NO.1 SINGLES THE CHARTS EVER EXPERIENCED

Late last year, Jim Kerr wrote what he thought was one of the best ballads of his life. He'd turned 60 in July, and wanted to write about the wisdom he'd acquired along the way. "I'm not going to write a song about turning 60," admits Jim. "But, let's just say, I considered the challenge of writing about getting older." Jim and guitarist/keyboardist Charlie Burchill, friends since they were eight-year-olds in Glasgow, created "a softer idea" than usual: "Maybe it was Christmas coming on and me getting sentimental," as Jim puts it. "It's the kind of song that, if Neil Young did it, people would say, 'That's amazing! The guy is so honest, he's writing from the heart.' I played it to a couple of people, who went, 'Oh wow! That's really sweet.'"

Despite this early positivity, the ballad is definitely not getting released – because Simple Minds' manager vetoed it immediately. "He heard it and said, 'Fucking *no*. You're not *that* old. Leave it out – you're not fucking Clive Dunn!'" Jim laughs casually, utterly unconcerned at his idea being squashed so brutally. Simple Minds may have sold more than 60 million albums, but if they get compared to the *Dad's Army* actor who sang *Grandad*...? So long as it's a funny story, Jim Kerr would rather tell that than be earnest about his band's reputation.

BACK IN THE BIG TIME

In 2020, Jim and his lifelong double-act partner can afford to be relaxed. Starting with Simple Minds' 16th album *Big Music* six years ago, the band have been on top again, back to the experimental force when they rampaged out of Scotland in the late 70s, able now to commandeer arenas again. 2018's adventurous *Walk Between Worlds* reached No.4 in the UK, returning Simple Minds to the Top Five for the first time since *Good News From The Next World* 23 years earlier. "A renewed confidence came with *Big Music*," Jim acknowledges. "We thought we'd made a good record, but the reaction from the public was equally important. It's propelled us ever since. The momentum these past few years, it feels great."

Even in conversation, Jim is a natural showman, an expansive talker with a great eye for a yarn. He's also a champion swearer, knowing exactly when to

Charlie Burchill and Jim Kerr, 2020. "We still amaze each other"

© Dean Chalkley

Street Fighting Years was recorded during a period of personnel changes for Simple Minds

drop the F-bomb for comic effect. Charlie is quieter, but then most people are next to Jim Kerr. The other surviving founder Simple Mind, Burchill is more of a dreamer than his bullish pal. "We're very different people," he admits. "But Jim and I have always had a strange bond artistically. If we haven't seen each other for a couple of months, the chances are we'll have been watching the same movies and TV shows and read the same books. It's just weird, how we're drawn to the same ideas."

Currently, that kinship means Simple Minds are heading back to the dancefloor. For three albums from 1980's *Empires And Dance* through *Sons And Fascinations/Sister Feelings Call* to *New Gold Dream (81/82/83/84)*, Simple Minds were at the vanguard of synthesiser experimentation. They never lost their desire but, once *Waterfront* made Simple Minds more radio-friendly, their sound certainly became more streamlined. Jim explains: "I said to Charlie when we started thinking about the next record, 'I think it'd be good for Simple Minds to have a more dancey feel again.' I meant that in terms of Simple Minds' dance music: songs like *I Travel* and *Love Song*, with those kind of funk basslines running through them."

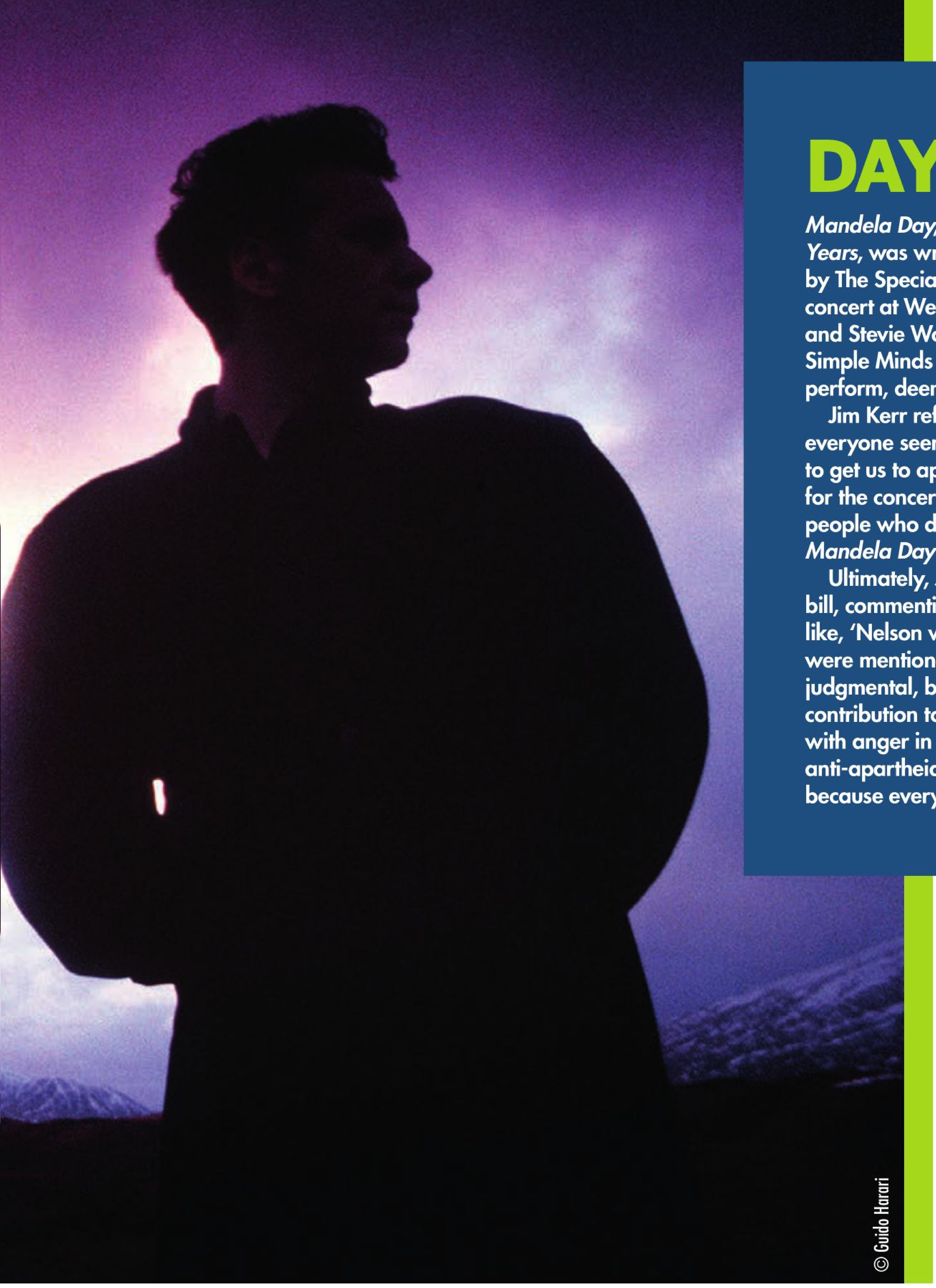
Of six songs demoed so far, Jim says four are in that mould. It helps that Charlie's become obsessed by the Moog One, a retro-designed piece of kit he describes as "a hybrid of a digital and analogue synth". According to Jim: "A lot of our music flows from whatever new gear Charlie's just bought. He gets really excited by an old analogue synth or some guitar effects pedal and it becomes the talisman of the album."

According to Jim Kerr, the next Simple Minds studio album will be released in late 2021

© Dean Chalkley

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Currently working with Andy Wright and Gavin Goldberg, their production team since *Big Music,* Simple Minds are likely to "throw other people in, too, to get a different perspective," says Charlie. But the album is unlikely to appear until late next year, with Simple Minds spending most of 2020 on tour. "We haven't played for about a year, when playing live is what we feel we do best," Charlie reckons. "It makes sense to play again now. A lot of musicians look at



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DAY OF ACTION

***Mandela Day*, the centrepiece protest song on *Street Fighting Years*, was written in just 15 minutes, after Simple Minds were asked by The Specials founder Jerry Dammers to appear at the Mandela Day concert at Wembley Stadium in June 1988. Dire Straits, the Bee Gees and Stevie Wonder also appeared – but it's long been reported that Simple Minds didn't want George Michael and Whitney Houston to perform, deeming them "too lightweight".**

Jim Kerr refutes the claim, but admits he was disappointed that not everyone seemed to take the cause seriously. "Part of Jerry's pitch to get us to appear was that everyone would write a song especially for the concert," Jim recalls. "That kind of concert can get hijacked by people who don't know what the cause is, when writing a song – like *Mandela Day* – made it an artistic statement, too."

Ultimately, Jim respects the reasons for the megastars joining the bill, commenting: "Trying to get it televised, the Americans were like, 'Nelson who? What?', but as soon as George and Whitney were mentioned, it was, 'Now you're talking!' We didn't want to be judgmental, but we'd hoped people would make a pertinent artistic contribution to the gig, not just turn up. It was a beautiful occasion, with anger in the air as well as so much great music. People in the anti-apartheid movement have said that concert was a tipping point, because everyone knew Mandela's name afterwards."

such a long list of dates and go, 'Aargh! Six months! What about my *home*?', but Jim and I love it!"

Charlie and Jim have nearly always been able to coexist happily. But, once megastardom hit, it naturally jolted the band massively. This month sees the reissue of *Street Fighting Years* – the album that confirmed Simple Minds as a stadium outfit and gave them their only No.1 single *Belfast Child*, but which also led to both bassist John Giblin and founding keyboardist Mick MacNeil quitting. Released in 1989, *Street Fighting Years* was intended to be a political synth-pop opus co-produced by Trevor Horn, but instead saw the Frankie Goes To Hollywood and ABC overlord turn Simple Minds into folkies. *Belfast Child* is a No.1 single based on a centuries-old traditional folk song that lasts for seven minutes. No wonder *Street Fighting Years* sent Simple Minds mad.

There's a photo on the wall of Jim's study at his home in Glasgow, of Simple Minds stood by the Berlin Wall on tour in 1979. "The world was a different place then," says Jim. "We grew up in the Cold War. Travelling through Europe at an early age as we did, we were touched by a lot of those places which had a resonance from our childhood." Talking about his father Jimmy, Kerr continues: "He was a construction worker, but he was a well-read man who was keen on informing us that the world didn't finish at the end of our street – that's where it began. Dad said we owed it to ourselves to know what was going on in the world."

After 1985's *Once Upon A Time* became their second No.1 album at home and made Simple Minds stars in America, Jim felt it was time to start writing about the outside world, rather than his own emotional landscape. This was, he admits, also because he was getting divorced from Chrissie Hynde, having married in 1984. "It wasn't one of those brutal, ugly divorces," Jim emphasises. "But the last thing I wanted to write about was myself. I didn't want to sit licking my own wounds."

Jim was aware of the backlash awaiting any songwriter trying to make sense of the politically turbulent times. *Street Fighting Years* discusses Greenpeace, South Africa's apartheid regime, Northern Ireland and the Poll Tax introduced during the last years of Margaret Thatcher's government. "The first thing people think is, 'Who the fuck are *you* to say this and what world are *you* now living in?'," admits Jim. "But I take great pride in Glasgow, in 1981, being the first city in the world to give Nelson Mandela a Freedom Of The City award, when he was still vilified and being called a terrorist nearly everywhere else. The word 'activists' might be pushing it, but we were from that background. It was inevitable the strains of that would come out in our music."

The 1989 album *Street Fighting Years*, seen here in its 4CD boxset form, was produced by Trevor Horn and Stephen Lipson and delivered Simple Minds' first and only UK No.1 single in *Belfast Child*. Three further singles were all Top 20 UK hits.

THE HIGHLANDERS

Jim, Charlie, Mick, John and drummer Mel Gaynor decamped to Glenstriven in the Scottish Highlands, where they'd built their own studio near an Army testing base. "We told Trevor Horn it's where they test nuclear submarines," laughs Jim. "You could get away with those stories in the days before checking on Google. Trevor was going *'Whaaat?'* It *is* true submarines were tested there during World War II." Charlie adds: "It was a great place to make a record, as it felt like we were a bunch of kids let loose in a beautiful isolated house. There were none of the distractions of an urban environment, so we were able to use our fantasy side more."

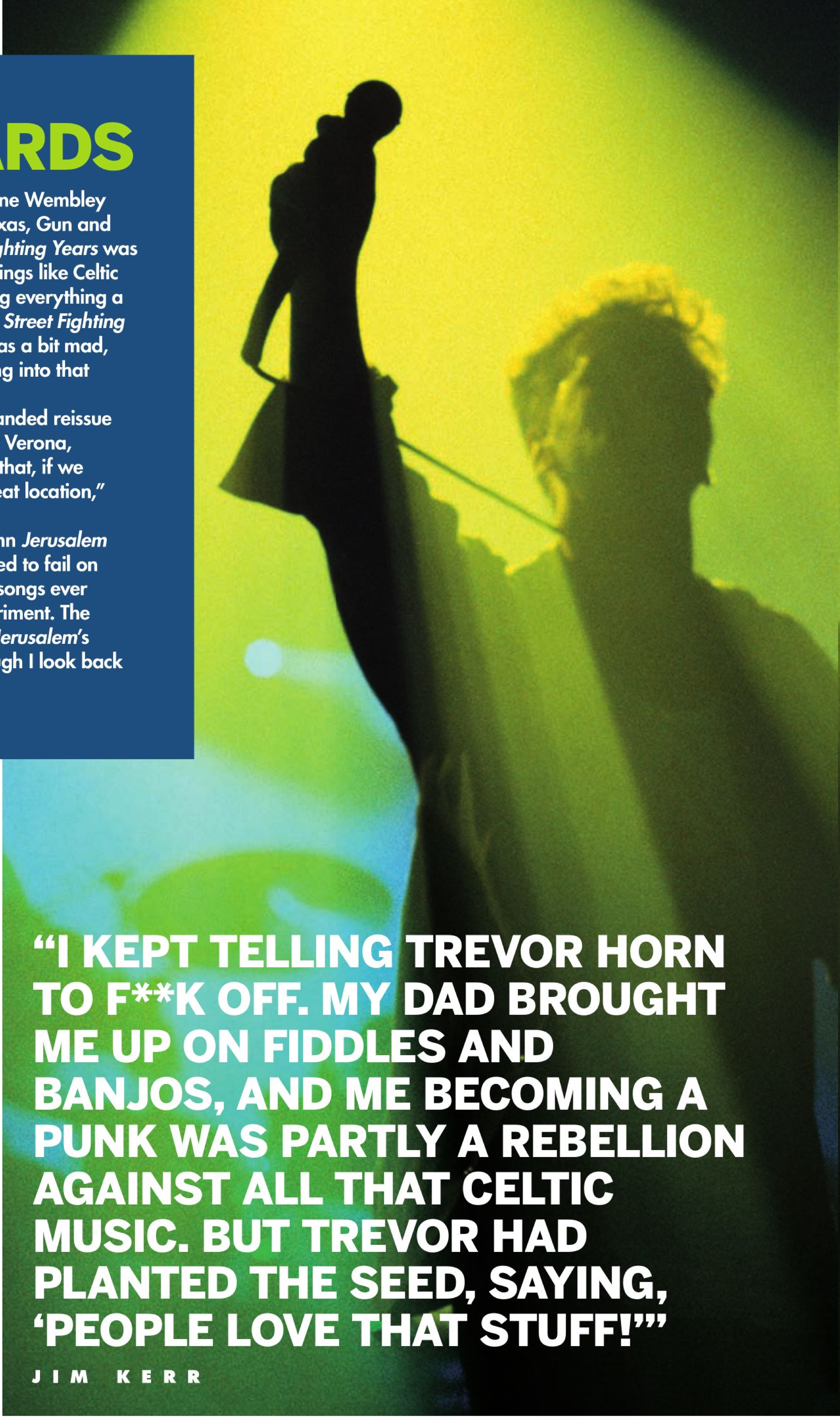
Recruiting Trevor and his

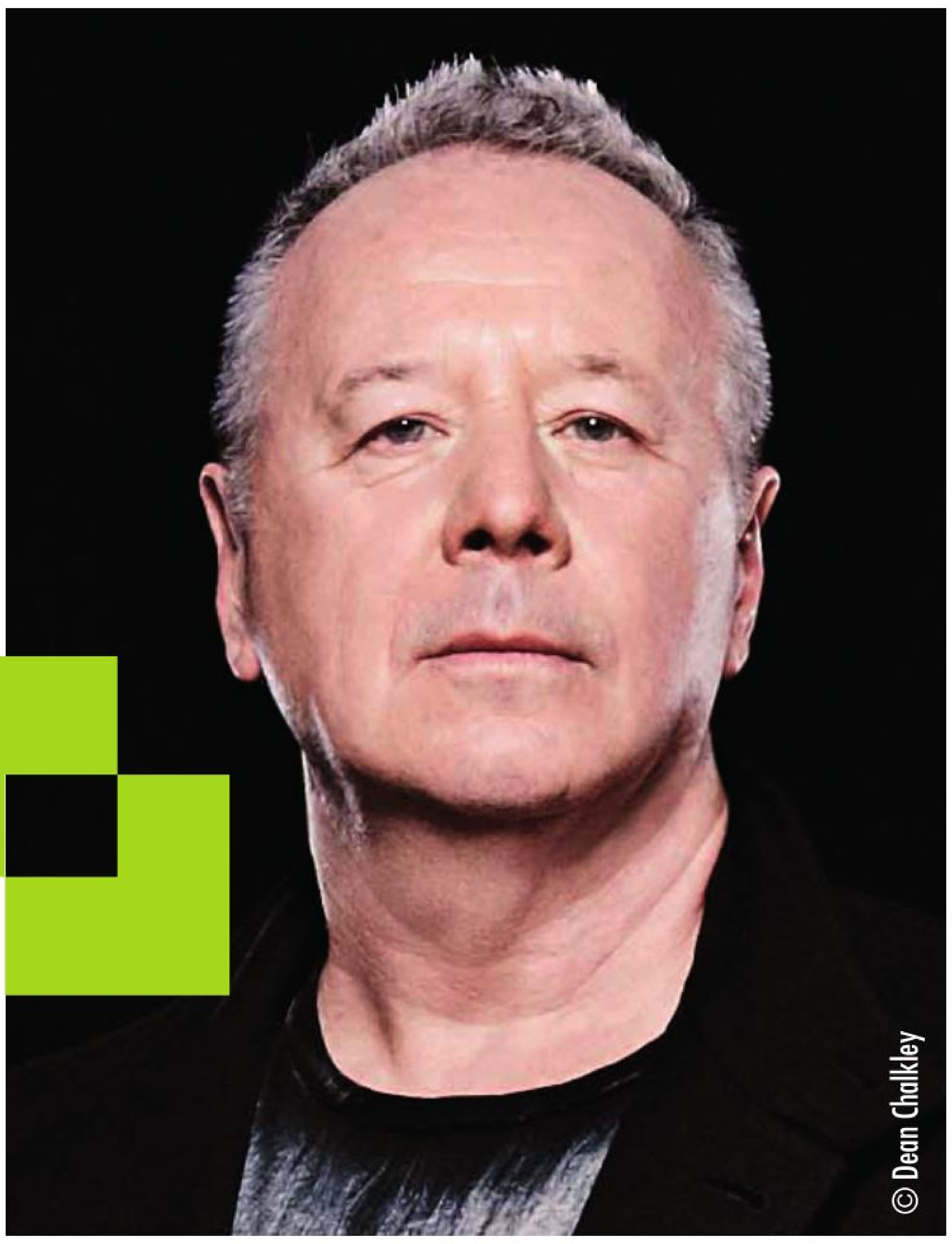
WEMBLEY WIZARDS

The tour for *Street Fighting Years* saw Simple Minds headline Wembley Stadium for the first time, in August 1989, supported by Texas, Gun and The Silencers. "Considering we were in stadiums, *Street Fighting Years* was an adventurous tour," says Charlie Burchill. "We played things like Celtic songs with a fiddle break in the middle and we were giving everything a shot. We opened our Wembley show with the title track of *Street Fighting Years*, which doesn't even really have any drums in it! It was a bit mad, but we had to play stadiums on our terms. If we were going into that environment, we had to do what we wanted."

As well as a disc of B-sides and remixes, the newly-expanded reissue of *Street Fighting Years* includes a 2CD concert recorded in Verona, previously released as the live video *Verona*. "We figured that, if we were filming a concert video, we may as well choose a great location," laughs Charlie.

Among the B-sides for the album were covers of the hymn *Jerusalem* and Prince's *Sign O' The Times*. "We knew we were doomed to fail on *Sign O' The Times*, because why cover one of the greatest songs ever made?" admits Charlie. "We did it for fun, just as an experiment. The same for *Jerusalem*, really – for a song with such history, *Jerusalem*'s melody is really quite playful. It was a fun idea to try, though I look back now and think, 'Oof, that was a bit out there!'"





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"I KEPT TELLING TREVOR HORN TO FK OFF. MY DAD BROUGHT ME UP ON FIDDLES AND BANJOS, AND ME BECOMING A PUNK WAS PARTLY A REBELLION AGAINST ALL THAT CELTIC MUSIC. BUT TREVOR HAD PLANTED THE SEED, SAYING, 'PEOPLE LOVE THAT STUFF!'"**

JIM KERR

Above: Jim Kerr called in producer Trevor Horn for a heart-to-heart talk during the difficult sessions for *Street Fighting Years*

right-hand man Stephen Lipson to produce *Street Fighting Years* was one of the great mix-ups of the 80s. "The bad news about that album and what I don't like about it is the timing," says Jim. "We'd had success beyond our belief and we were just on the verge of getting bored with our own thing. I don't think we quite knew that, and we certainly didn't talk about it, and it's inevitable after 10 years that it happened. We saw hitching our wagon to Trevor and Stephen's *Fantasia* production world as like strapping on rocket engines."

There was just one slight problem with recruiting electronic pioneers to mix up Simple Minds' sound. Charlie summarises: "Trevor and Steve wanted to come to us because they thought, 'Great, we've got a band who can play for a change!' and they could relax a bit more than usual while we did our own thing."

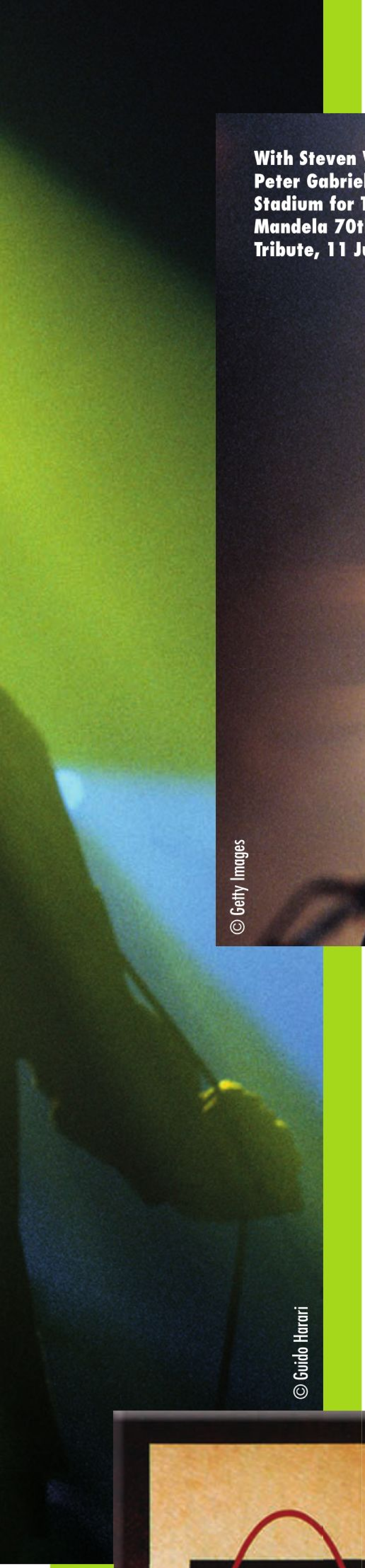
After six months of recording, obviously struggling, Jim decided to call Trevor in for a heart-to-heart. "Before he came along, Trevor told me, 'Jim, one of the reasons we wanted to work with you is we're bored of our thing,'" recalls Jim. "So there we were, two camps bored of their sound, looking for the other to help. I just thought, 'Oh, for *fuck's sake*!' I'm sure we didn't give Trevor and Stephen the easiest time, and it says something they didn't work together again after *Street Fighting Years*. We were a bit dead on our feet and it's still a frustration that atmosphere was there."

Despite the impasse, Jim and Charlie both speak glowingly about the childlike sense of wonder Horn brought to the studio. "Trevor is fearless," says Charlie, while Jim adds: "He'd convince you anything was possible. If you think of Trevor's music, so much of his budget goes into one or two big songs that the rest of the record ends up getting done pretty quick. There's a bit of that in *Street Fighting Years*, but mostly he'd kick the tyres of a song over and over, trying it a dozen different ways, until something was there."

Nine of the 10 songs on *Street Fighting Years* are over five minutes long. "There are only one or two where the length takes the feeling out of them," Charlie

With Steven Van Zandt and Peter Gabriel at Wembley Stadium for The Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute, 11 June 1988

© Getty Images



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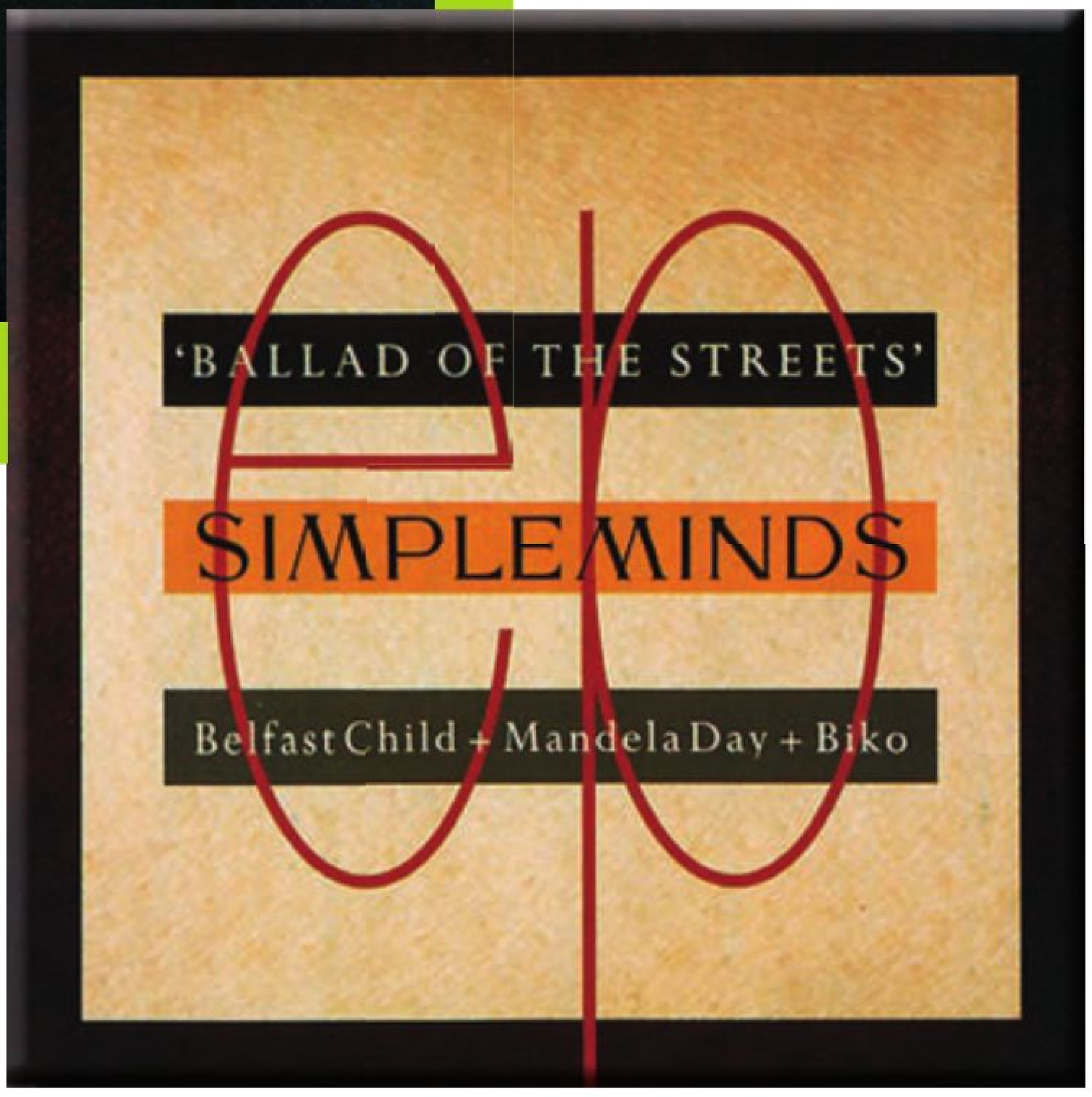
insists. "But I look at some songs and think, 'We nearly got there, but we didn't quite get it.' We worked harder on *Take A Step Back* than any other song on the album, but we never quite got it. There's a lot of interesting stuff in that track and it's a shame – in a different time or place, with different people, maybe somebody somehow could have unearthed what's in the middle of that song. It happens."

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

Honest about their frustrations, Jim and Charlie feel there are moments of magic – not least *Belfast Child*. It began when John wandered off from a band dinner at Glenstriven, playing traditional Irish folk song *She Moved Through The Fair* on a piano when Jim found him in the instrument room. "John is a deep guy, which was reflected in the music he played," Jim explains. "I was captivated by this Celtic piece and, when he finished, I said to John, 'Wow! When did you write *that*?' and John replied, 'About 200 years ago…'" In the pre-internet days, Jim began searching out covers of *She Moves Through The Fair*, with his favourite "a drunk Irish woman singing it in a pub in Camden, it was just so blues." In love with the isolated Scottish countryside, Horn had already suggested Simple Minds should attempt a Celtic song. "I kept telling Trevor to fuck off," Jim admits. "My dad brought me up on fiddles and banjos, and me becoming a punk was partly a rebellion against all that music. But Trevor had planted the seed, saying, 'People love that stuff!'"



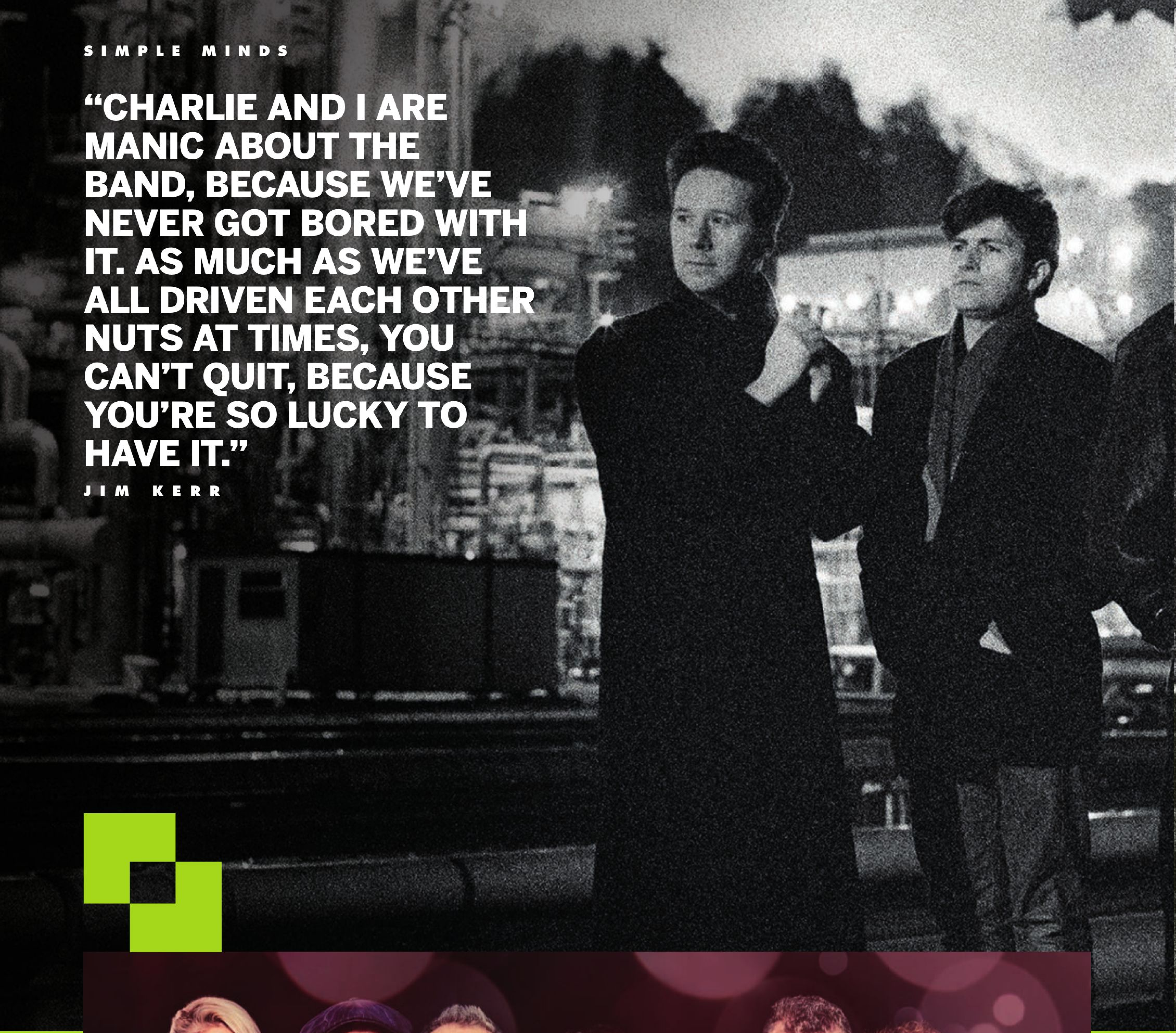
Above: The *Ballad Of The Streets* EP was released on 6 February 1989 and featured an all-political set of songs

Politically aware as he was, Jim wasn't certain he should adapt *She Moves Through The Fair* into a Simple Minds song discussing the Northern Ireland conflict. "I was nervous about it, because songs like that can seem mawkish, tokenistic and trite," he says. "If you isolate the lyrics to *Belfast Child,* it can seem that way, even though our heart was in the right place. But I think it's different, because of the emotion in the song. Around the world, apart from the States, *Belfast Child* was huge. It connected, because it was a song loaded with emotion." How does Jim feel about *Belfast Child* being the band's only No.1 single? "Listen, any success is a great thing," he laughs. "For that one week, it was the biggest song in Britain. If you're asking, 'Am I still glad I did it?', then too right I am. To have the balls to mess around with that big a sacred cow of the folk world? Great! The folkies were going, 'You can't fucking do *that* to *She Moves Through The Fair*!', when the folk world changes lyrics and melodies around forever. I thought, 'Give me a break, you're only jealous you hadn't thought of it first.'"

That *Belfast Child* began with John Giblin walking out of a band dinner was typical of the bassist. The former Kate Bush and John Martyn player had made his Simple Minds debut at Live Aid in 1985, but left halfway through recording *Street Fighting Years.* "John was seven years older than us and I suspect we were quite brattish around him," recalls Jim. "He'd done so much more than us in who he'd worked with and he was a lone wolf who didn't say much. John's stoicism added to his charm, but we always knew he was never going to sign up to Simple Minds' youth club."

Far more surprising was the departure of Mick MacNeil, who quit at the end of the Street Fighting Years tour in 1990. Charlie is laidback about the keyboardist going, saying: "We'd had so much success, it was the end of a decade, Mick wanted more time with his family… Ultimately, Mick felt he'd covered so much ground, there was nothing left to achieve. That's great, as a lot of people don't know when to stop."

It's easy to get a sense of the ambition driving Simple Minds forward 30 years later when Jim is asked

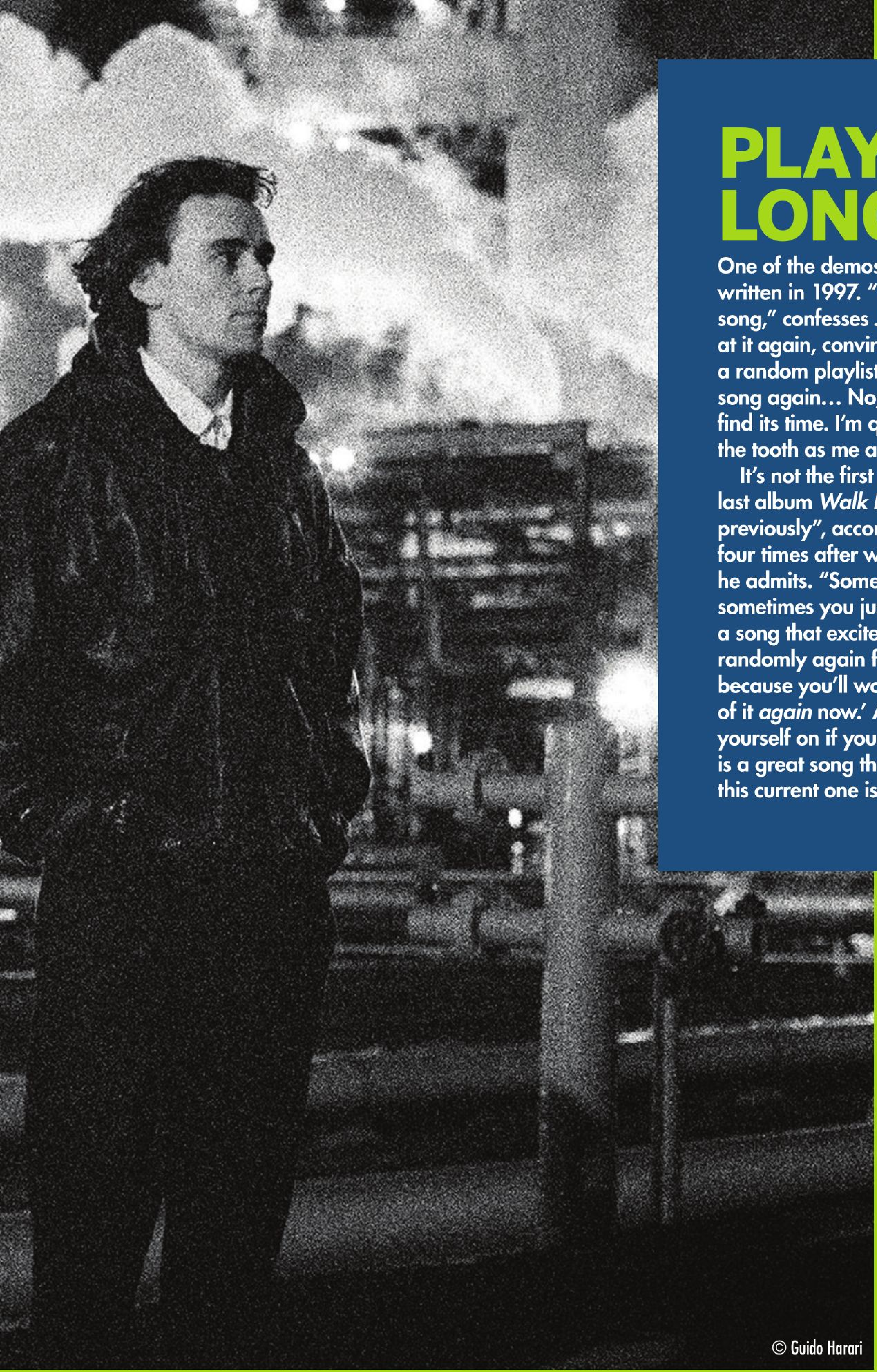


"CHARLIE AND I ARE MANIC ABOUT THE BAND, BECAUSE WE'VE NEVER GOT BORED WITH IT. AS MUCH AS WE'VE ALL DRIVEN EACH OTHER NUTS AT TIMES, YOU CAN'T QUIT, BECAUSE YOU'RE SO LUCKY TO HAVE IT."

JIM KERR

© Dean Chalkley

Simple Minds, 2020-style



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PLAYING THE LONG GAME

One of the demos Simple Minds are considering for their new album was first written in 1997. "We've been round the houses three or four times with this song," confesses Jim Kerr. "We've kicked it into touch, swore we'd never look at it again, convinced ourselves it's a pile of crap. Then one day, it turns up on a random playlist on your iTunes, and you go, 'There's that fucking terrible song again… No, hold on, this sounds *great*!' Sometimes, a song just needs to find its time. I'm quite sure that's the case with most writers who are as long in the tooth as me and Charlie."

It's not the first time a Simple Minds track has come out of storage: on their last album *Walk Between Worlds*, two songs had begun "at least 20 years previously", according to the singer. "They'd also been wheeled out three or four times after we'd gone down the wrong road with them and come back," he admits. "Sometimes songs are in the vaults because they're no good, sometimes you just can't crack it. There's obviously something at the start of a song that excites you and, like this current idea, it just takes it popping up randomly again for you to go, 'That's great!' But sometimes you get fooled, because you'll work on it for months again, only to go, 'Oh God, I'm bored of it *again* now.' A song can be great for the first minute, but you're kidding yourself on if you think it's good for all four minutes. And sometimes it really is a great song that just doesn't fit with the rest of the pack. All I can say about this current one is, I hope it doesn't take us another 22 years to get it right!"

***This Is Your Land* featured guest vocals from former Velvet Underground frontman Lou Reed**
© Waring Abbott

about Mick. "I have to acknowledge everyone is different," he considers.

"Me and Charlie are marathon runners, Mick's a sprinter. But I still think, 'Fuck him. I wouldn't like to be in the trenches with *you,* Mick. Go on, go home!'" Jim's laughing as he says it, and speaks warmly of meeting Mick for the first time in decades, when he guested on Simple Minds' version of Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms* for Trevor Horn's recent covers album *Reimagines The Eighties*. Jim reveals: "Mick said he didn't regret going, and I'm really glad about that, because it'd be awful if he did."

SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND

Nonetheless, the singer can't really understand why anyone would walk away from being in a successful band, saying: "Charlie and I are manic about the band, because we've never got bored with it. As much as we've all driven each other nuts at times, you can't quit, because you're so lucky to have it.

"People are invested in you. The amount of people who want to be in a band, compared to the tiny percentage of people who get the chance of doing what we do? I feel a great sense of obligation to that."

As driven as Kerr and Burchill are, they're amateurs compared to former Velvet Underground frontman Lou Reed, who sings on ecology anthem *This Is Your Land.* One of the first songs written for *Street Fighting Years*, Jim happened to sing a verse impersonating Lou, but couldn't work out what to do with it as the recording deadline neared. Trevor Horn suggested "Why not ask Lou Reed?" Jim recalls: "I told Trevor, 'What are you *talking* about? He's the world's biggest curmudgeon!' A friend was Lou's PR at the time – she'd phone me in tears, going, 'He's a fucking nightmare.'"

Nightmare or not, Lou agreed when Trevor called him. Jim and engineer Heff Moraes – "a 16-year-old and the world's biggest Simple Minds fan" – were dispatched to Paris to record Lou's vocals.

"Walking through the airport, I had my first ever panic attack," Jim recalls. "I told Heff, 'You'll have to do it. What am *I* going to say to Lou Reed?!' Heff was so sweet, saying, 'What are you talking about? You're Jim Kerr!'"

Jim had pulled some strings to get a table at Paris' most in-demand restaurant for their meeting, saying: "It didn't look like it, but Lou loved the world's great restaurants. At least I had the wisdom to know that and source that table." When The Velvet Underground grump asked how he should sing, Kerr asked him to just sing it as Lou Reed. "Lou said, 'Everyone else is trying to be Lou Reed, so I may as well.'"

Reed's vocals on *This Is Your Land* were recorded in three takes, and *Street Fighting Years* became Simple Minds' third No.1 album. It succeeded everywhere except America, though Charlie admits: "You can't have a seven-minute ballad about Belfast and expect the great American public to like it. When we were making *Street Fighting Years,* we thought, 'We're not really going to get America on this one, are we?' and we weren't really bothered, as we've only ever made records for us."

That spirit continues 30 years later, as Charlie neatly sums up Simple Minds' chemistry: "Jim's words make sense of my music and gives it an imagery. Likewise, Jim can't tell one note from the next and what I do is a world of wonder to him. We still amaze each other." ■

● **The expanded 4CD version of *Street Fighting Years* is out now via UMC**

Left to right: Jon Farriss, Kirk Pengilly, Michael Hutchence, Garry "Gary" Beers, Tim Farriss, Andrew Farriss
© Peggy Sirota

“We were all part of a brotherhood”

THEY WERE THE AUSSIE GANG WHO COULD HAVE ENDED UP AS PETROL PUMP ATTENDANTS. INSTEAD, INXS CONQUERED THE WORLD AND BECAME EMBROILED IN A SAGA OF DRUGS, GHOSTS, UNDIAGNOSED MENTAL ILLNESS, SUPERMODELS AND, ULTIMATELY, A TRAGIC DEATH. AS TWO NEW FILMS REMIND EVERYONE OF THEIR LEGACY, THE SURVIVING BAND MEMBERS AND THEIR MANAGER TELL CLASSIC POP HOW THEY BECAME NEW SENSATIONS.

JOHN EARLS + STEVE HARNELL

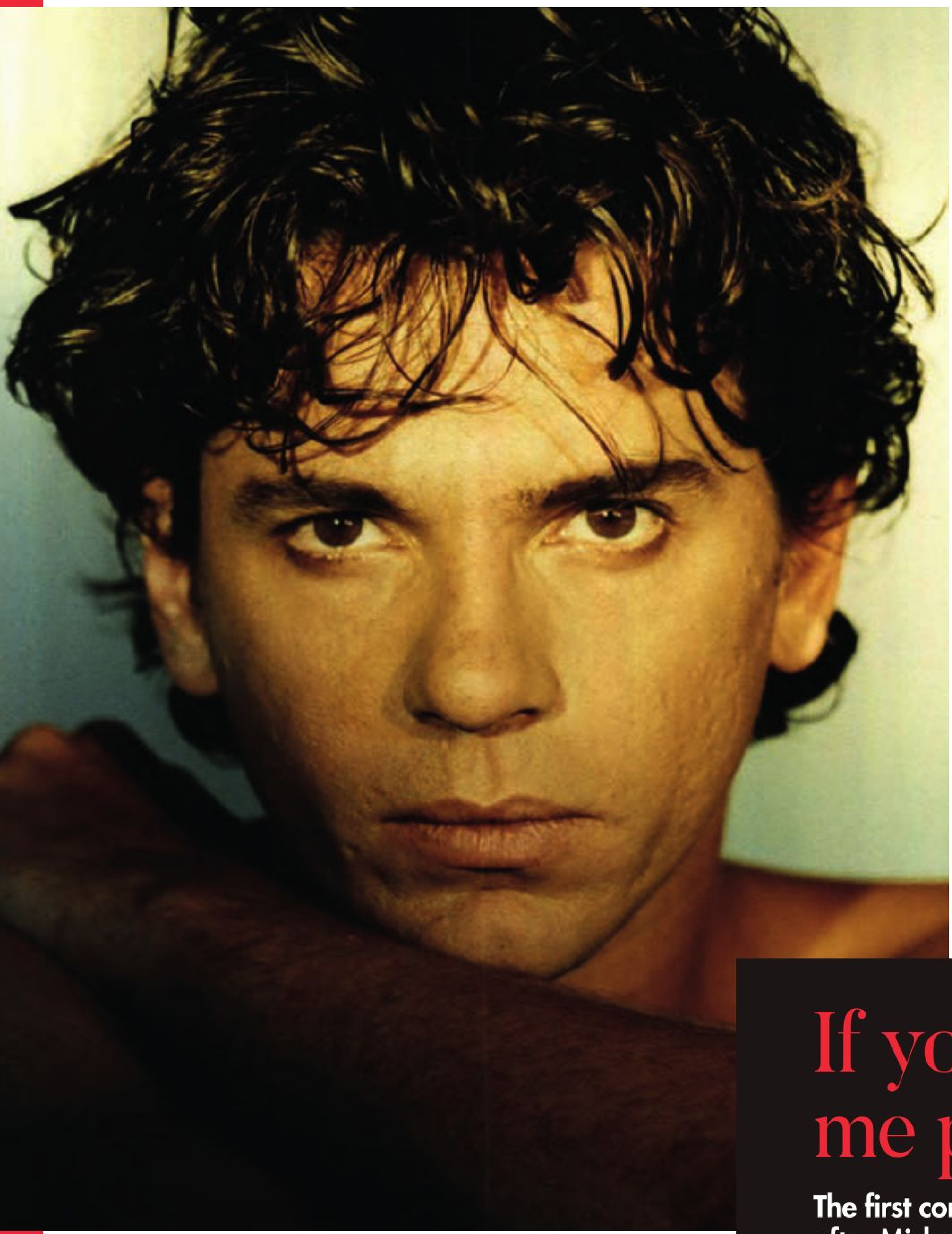
When you've got a frontman as powerful and charismatic as Michael Hutchence, it's easy to romanticise your band's history. Not INXS, who emphasise that Michael had to learn how to be a proper rock star. “Michael was a terrible singer when we started,” says bassist Garry “Gary” Beers fondly. “Michael had *something*, but it wasn't a great voice. That old joke about ‘Ringo Starr wasn't the best drummer in the world… he wasn't even the best drummer in The Beatles’… that was Michael.”

Saxophonist Kirk Pengilly seemed the obvious choice as singer when guitarist Tim Farriss and his younger brother Andrew's high school bands merged as The Farriss Brothers in Sydney in 1977. “At first, Kirk was the more accomplished singer,” insists Garry. “But Michael just had a spark to him from the beginning. The girls all wanted to get with him and the guys all wanted to hang out with him. All six of us were incredibly lucky to work together, because INXS is completely the sum of its parts. None of us would have made it without each other.”

Tim Farriss agrees, noting: “When we were The Farriss Brothers, Michael was this pimple-covered kid who couldn't really sing. Then he grew up to be this amazing singer. His voice matured, so did the way he wrote lyrics. He always wanted more and was never happy with the way things were.”

What really changed things, as obvious as it sounds, was practice. INXS didn't release their biggest album *Kick* until 1987, which was a full decade and six LPs after they had formed. Garry admits: “We were lucky, because you don't get two singles before you're dropped now”, but he points out how hard they worked to get there.

“I had a job for a couple of years pumping gas and cleaning toilets,” he says. “Some of the other guys had similar jobs, so we totally knew what we *didn't* want to do. When we started, half of us were driven to succeed and half of us didn't fully understand how much work was going to be involved.”



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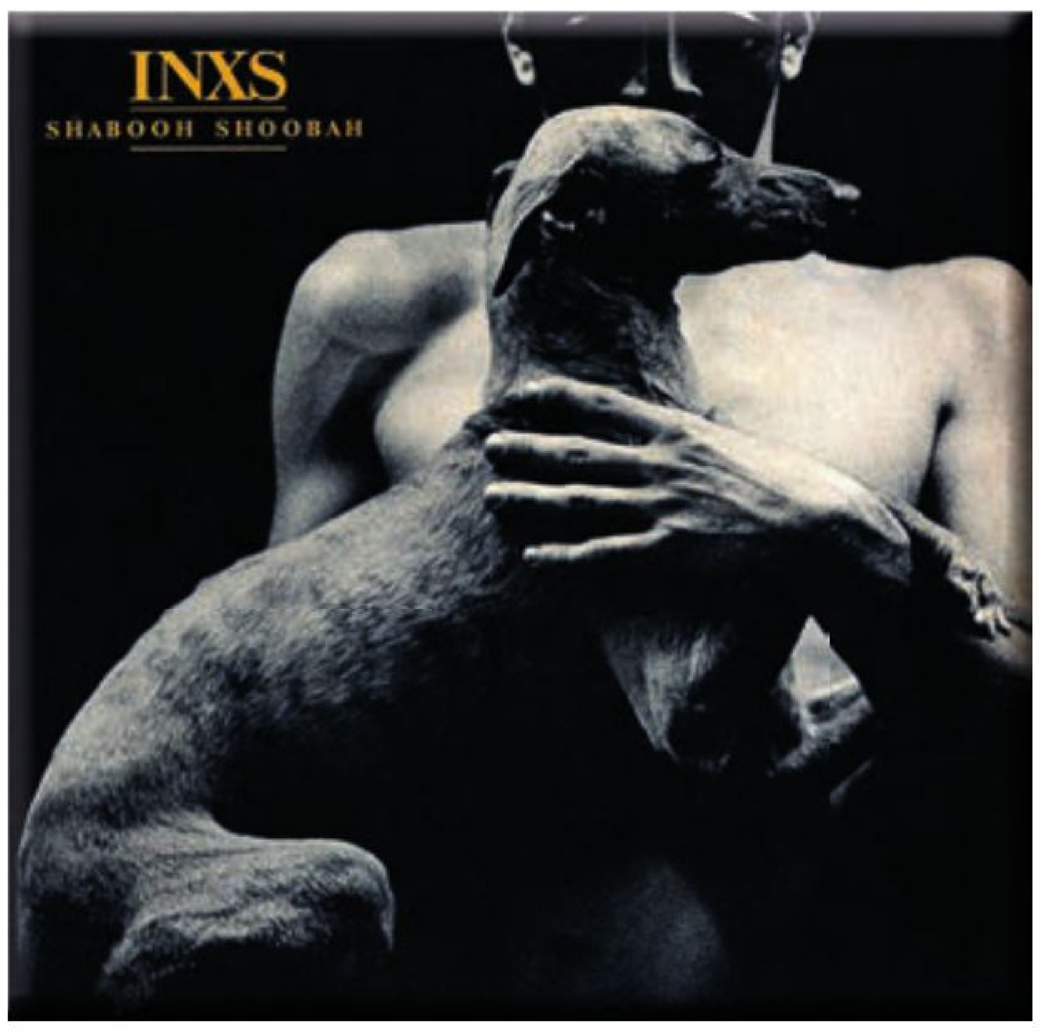
The workload was partially down to INXS manager Chris Murphy. He cheerfully confesses that he, "worked the band like dogs" after being won over by a show in 1979, shortly after The Farriss Brothers changed their name to INXS. Less a manager and more a showman in the PT Barnum, circus barker tradition, within five minutes Chris is telling *Classic Pop* how he and his production partner Mark Edwards are responsible for the popularisation of reggaeton in the US. He's wildly entertaining now, so must have been bloody terrifying when he and his charges had the world to conquer 40 years ago.

"INXS started out very quirky, a ska band with a rock influence," Chris recalls. "But they were dangerous and had a hell of an energy about them." Almost as dangerous as the conditions the band faced, as Garry explains: "We had no money, we were starving and we were always driving around Western Australia on deadly roads," he says. "It was tough, but the shows were fun and we knew we were good."



TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES

INXS were together for 20 years before Michael's tragic death in November 1997. He died by suicide the weekend before an Australian tour was due to start, wracked by a bitter custody battle over his daughter with Paula Yates. Paula's ex-husband, Bob Geldof, thought the couple were unfit parents after opium was discovered at their home and sought to bring Heavenly Hirani up himself. A compelling new documentary about Michael makes clear he was battling another major problem – a brain injury that he'd kept secret from everyone, including his bandmates.

In August 1992, Michael was in Copenhagen visiting his girlfriend, Helena Christensen. Drunkenly cycling to the supermodel's home, he refused to let a taxi overtake him. The cab driver punched Michael, who hit his head on the pavement as he fell. His behaviour was never the same again, and new film *Mystify* – made by INXS' regular video director Richard Lowenstein – explains the awful extent of Michael's brain damage.

"Michael the rock star vanished in some way," states Tim of the singer's behaviour after Copenhagen. "He became less rock star and more celebrity – his life became more about himself than the band. We could see he'd lost the plot in some ways and were giving him space."

The biggest reason INXS remained so tight is their bond formed in high school. But that same bond meant they still acted, to a certain extent, like schoolboys throughout.

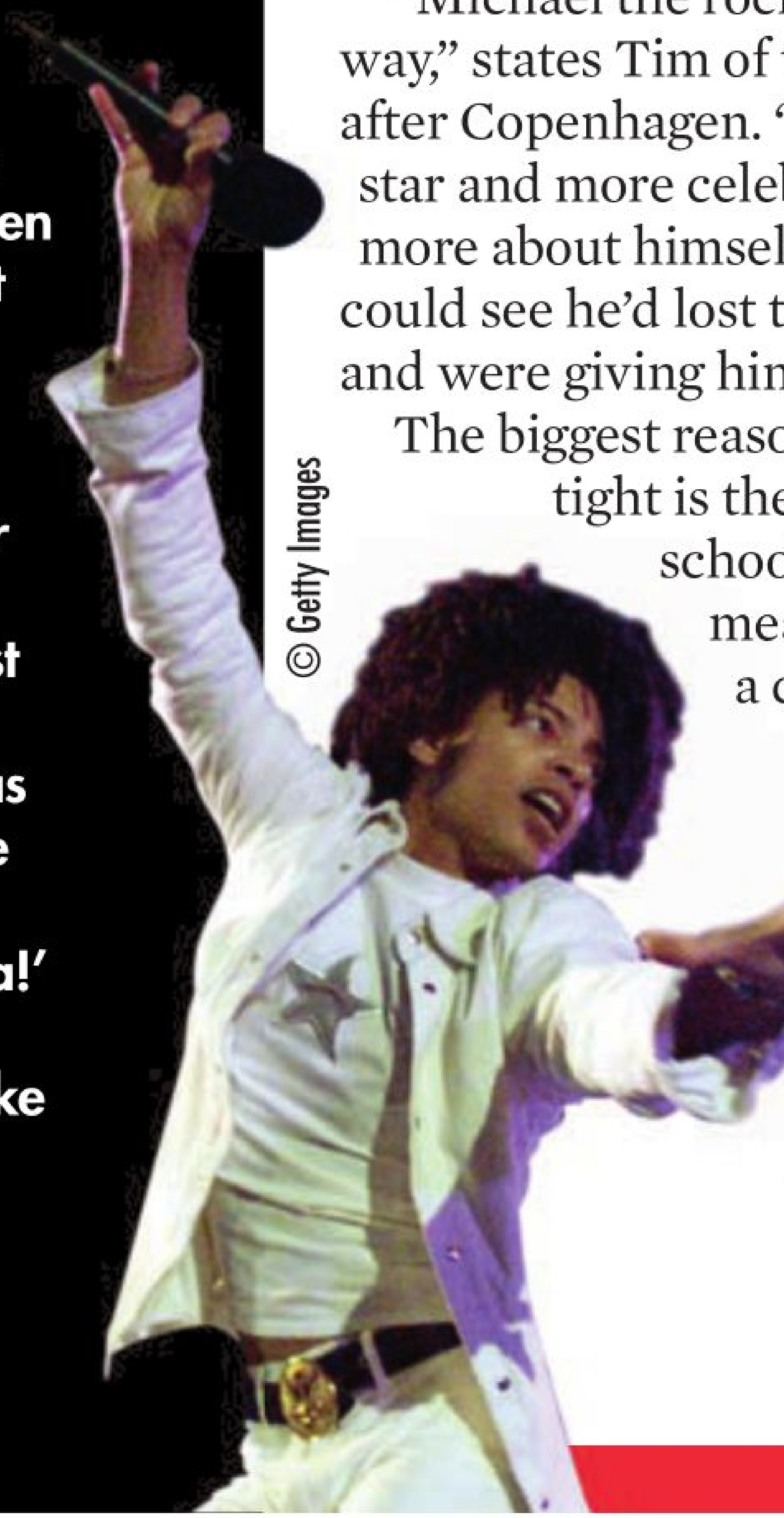
"We were kind of blokey," admits Tim. "Michael probably would have liked to

If you let me play

The first concert INXS played after Michael Hutchence's death was in November 1998, when Australian rocker Jimmy Barnes fronted the band for a show to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their local record label, Mushroom.

In June 1999, INXS performed again to mark the opening of Sydney Stadium, the key venue for the 2000 Olympic Games. Their singer? Terence Trent D'Arby. Both parties emphasised it would only be a one-off performance and even 20 years on, Tim Farriss still seems slightly bemused by it all. "Just rehearsing with Terence was *really* strange as he was so introverted," Tim admits. "He was hiding under Jon's drum cymbals in the same room we'd been rehearsing with Michael. It was really creepy."

Even for the final rehearsal, Terence stayed in the foetal position under Jon Farriss' drum riser. "I said 'Are you going to bust any moves in the show or what?'," recalls Tim. "I was thinking it was going to be a disaster. Then it came to the show and it was 'Ta-da!' Terence just leapt out and became this *thing*. I was like 'Holy fuck!'"



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> My favourite INXS songs aren't the big hits, but the ones from before, when we were a bit more adventurous
>
> GARRY "GARY" BEERS

have discussed emotional issues more. We were all pretty complex individuals, and if anyone had a problem, all they had to do was mention it. That's the trouble with men, though: they don't like to talk about those kind of things. We weren't sure whether to give Michael space or offer him advice."

For Tim, his friend's brain damage prevented him being able to get clarity. He believes: "Had Michael not had the damage to his brain, he might have been able to see his best chance of getting back to enjoying life was to embrace what he had with us as a band – and not let the rest of the world get to him so much."

Garry is more circumspect, saying: "I don't know what happened to Michael, and I don't want to think about it too much. I'm sure Michael would have wanted to see his daughter grow up to be a beautiful girl. It's been 22 years since Michael died, and I've got through all the emotional stuff. I'm not that emotional a guy and I've moved on." But it helps comfort Garry that he still feels Michael's presence, saying: "I still dream about Michael a lot. In those dreams, he's still cool, happy and beautiful. Michael was a very, very close mate and we were all part of a brotherhood."

THE EARLY ALBUMS

Listened to now, the INXS brotherhood's first four albums are long overdue some reassessment. The band certainly weren't the slick hit machine they became on *Kick*, but there's an illicit, potent spirit, especially on 1982's *Shabooh Shoobah*. "My favourite INXS songs aren't the big hits, but the ones

Always destined to be the band's frontman, Michael Hutchence's looks and magnetic persona ensured that he also became a media celebrity

from before, when we were a bit more adventurous," admits Garry. "Individuals got to shine more and the music was off the beaten track. There are so many hidden gems on *Shabooh Shoobah*." It featured *Don't Change*, which remained INXS' staple gig closer throughout their career.

The breakthrough in the US came in 1985, when *What You Need* from fifth album *Listen Like Thieves* reached No.5. The first time INXS worked with Chris Thomas, the veteran Roxy Music and Sex Pistols producer, it marked the start of a fascinating love/hate relationship with INXS manager Chris Murphy. "The record company were never allowed in the studio when INXS were making albums," recalls Murphy. "That wasn't going to happen, because I refused to have 'dead ears' in the studio. They had free rein and, when they were nearly finished, they'd say, 'Come and have a listen.' That's when I'd listen, and I'd say, 'Right, that's the first single, that's the second single and the third single is that.' Chris Thomas hated me for doing that."

The year before, fourth album *The Swing*'s lead single *Original Sin* had been produced by Nile Rodgers and featured Daryl Hall on backing vocals, but it only reached No.58 in the US, teaching INXS' manager a lot about US radio: "On *Listen Like Thieves*, we needed a rock track to relaunch us. After *Original Sin*, American radio was apprehensive about what we were: Rock? Pop? Disco? I told Chris Thomas all this but, when I went to grab a coffee at the studio, he came running up the hallway, yelling at me: 'Are you crazy?' I said: 'I might be crazy, but I know the American market and I know what this band needs.' Chris was still yelling at me – 'You're a shit! You should be shot!' – so

> We knocked on the door by touring relentlessly. That was the mentality of the era, and it's how we became famous.
>
> **TIM FARRISS**

I said: 'Chris, you're doing a great job. You do your job, let me do mine.' That worked, but exactly the same happened with *Kick*."

A BRILLIANT MESS

Kick – featuring *Never Tear Us Apart, New Sensation* and US chart-topper *Need You Tonight* – sold 20 million copies. It's been largely forgotten that INXS' label Atlantic initially refused to release it in the US. They hated its funk influence so much that Chris Murphy was offered $1million for the band to re-record it. Rejecting the offer, the manager instead approached Atlantic's radio promo team behind the board's back. Speaking about *Kick* now, Chris admits he was initially almost as baffled as Atlantic.

"*Kick* sounds like four different bands playing," he laughs. "There were big ballads, riffy rock, funk... *Kick* is brilliant, but it's all over the place and I thought, 'How am I going to pull this together into any kind of campaign?'" The solution came from Garry, when he casually mentioned *Mediate* and *Need You Tonight* had the same bassline running through them. Chris Murphy's solution was to launch the album – already unpopular at the record label – with all five minutes 37 seconds of *Need You Tonight* and *Mediate* merged together.

"Chris Thomas looked at me like I was on heroin," Chris recalls gleefully. "He was jumping out of his chair, screaming, 'You're just fucking insane!' I told him, 'Maybe I am, but remember how we launched *Listen Like Thieves*...?' Trust me!"

Need You Tonight began to take off and the rest was history. Well, apart from Atlantic refusing to promote *Kick* after grudgingly releasing it at all. "Radio helped, but it took a lot to make *Kick* happen," remembers Garry. "We had to finance publicising it ourselves, which meant touring until we couldn't stand up any longer. And Europe's taste is well behind everyone else's. Even though *Need You Tonight* had been No.1 in America, we had to release a remix before it finally charted in Europe." Success was certainly overdue, as Tim explains: "We knocked on the door by touring relentlessly. That was the mentality of the era, and it's how we became famous. We were a great live band, who didn't need props, pyrotechnics, bells or whistles."

THE ROAD TO WEMBLEY

Making *Kick* the success INXS had long deserved burnt everyone out. "We toured *Kick* for 18 months and, after that long, you're well into thinking about your next record," Garry explains. "But *Kick* was still on everyone's minds, so we couldn't make another record yet. We needed a break, because we all wanted to keep moving on. We were never the type of people to rest on our laurels."

Michael launched dance duo Max Q with composer Ollie Olsen; Garry played with Aussie supergroup Absent Friends; Tim and Kirk produced Sydney band Crash Politics and drummer Jon Farriss produced veteran singer-songwriter Richard Clapton.

When *X* was finally released in 1990, three years after *Kick*, the juggernaut continued. *Suicide Blonde* and *Disappear*

The band spent so much on filming their Wembley gig that they only broke even

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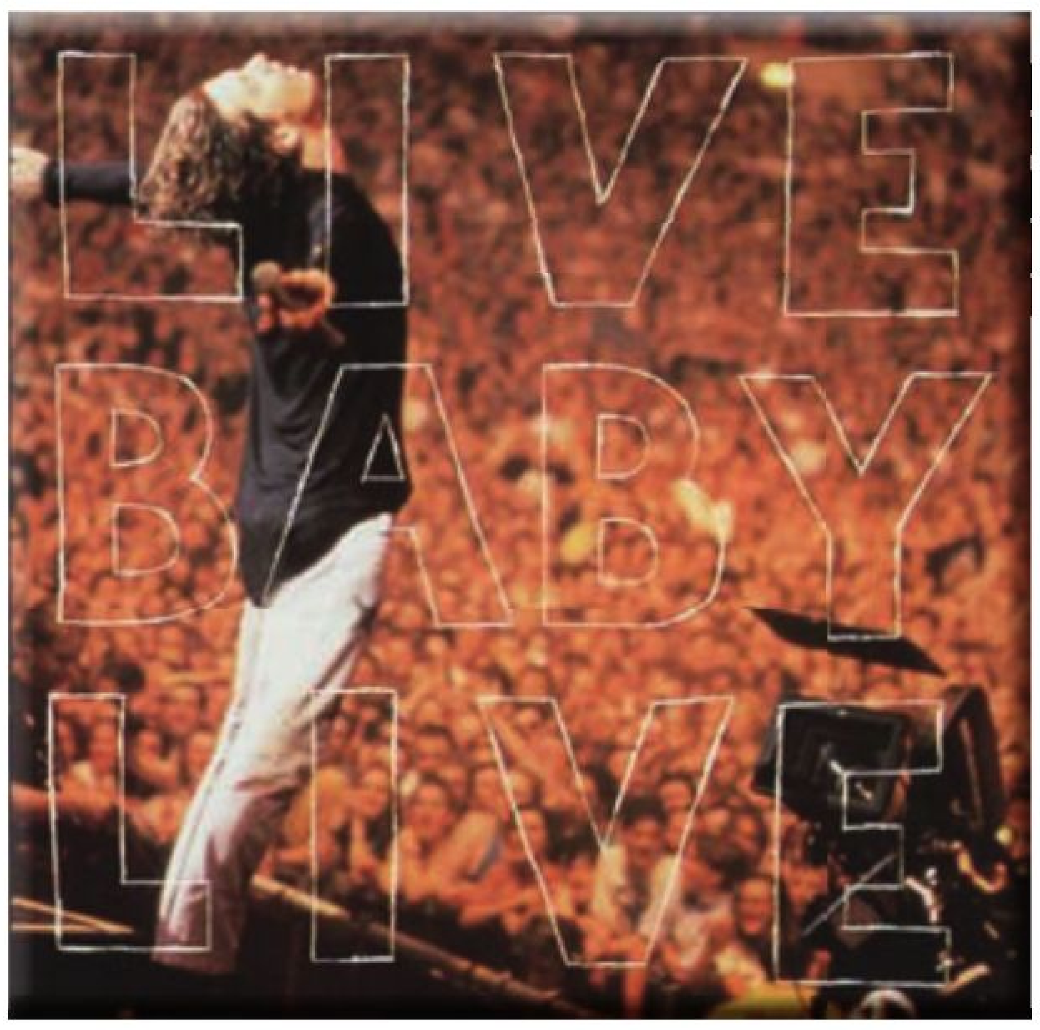


were huge singles. Touring was far more minimal than on *Kick*, largely limited to stadium shows, although it did lead to the definitive INXS concert when, on 13 July 1991, INXS played Wembley Stadium to 72,000 fans. If *Mystify* shows the complexities of INXS' lead singer, soon-to-be re-released concert film *Live Baby Live* is a celebration of a band at their peak, able to treat Wembley, in Michael's words, as "The biggest pub we've ever played." Tim recalls: "That was quite literally our mindset: all we had was a few lights and a PA."

INXS had previously played Wembley Stadium in 1986, supporting Queen. "Queen's was a very partisan crowd and we had things thrown at us," laughs Tim. "To go back a few years later to *our* audience and see them react the way they did was like 'Fuck yeah!'" Garry adds: "The band were on fire and Michael was above and beyond anyone else in the world at that time. We knew where we'd come from, so to get to those heights only made it more fun. Everything we did was a bit of a laugh, even Wembley. The first song was kind of a mistake – Jon started the drum groove of *Guns In The Sky* and the crowd went so nuts that we thought, 'Well, I guess we'd best get on stage.' We started Wembley Stadium with a jam, which was so enjoyable." Tim concludes: "It felt like a club gig, just with 77,000 people there."

GIG OF A LIFETIME

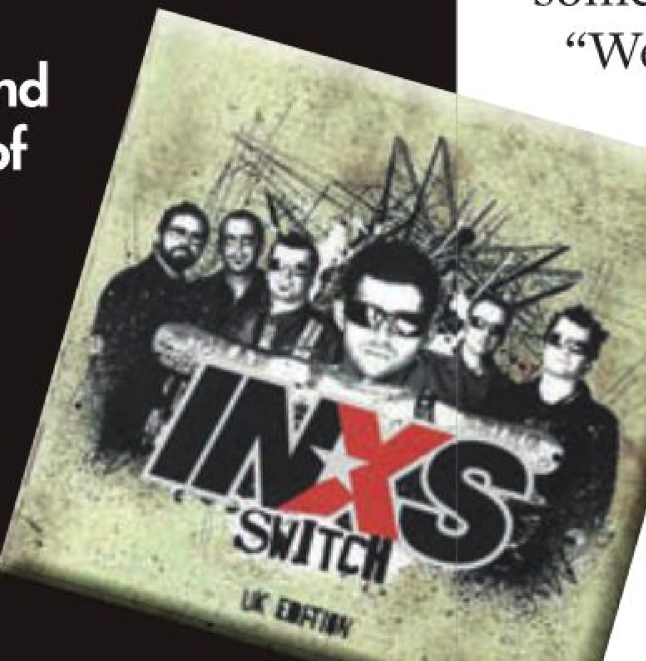
Despite the intimacy, Wembley was very much a showbiz affair. "The guestlist was something like 2,000 people," laughs Tim. "We'd have been happy to have 2,000 paying people there! We've played to some amazing people – you think, 'Shit... Mick Jagger is out there!' Queen used to watch us. You draw on those things to sharpen your senses, though; it gives you that twinge of endorphins and adrenaline."

There were just two problems with that show. Firstly, it over-ran, so the band didn't get to do their second encore of *Listen Like Thieves* and *Don't Change*. More practically, INXS spent so much on filming *Live Baby Live* that they didn't actually make any money headlining Wembley Stadium. "Not one cent," confirms Garry. Tim explains: "When Chris asked if we minded spending the money we'd make from Wembley on filming the show, we were like, 'Ahh, it's okay.' We were doing that many shows, it really wasn't

Wheel of Fortune

In 2004, INXS launched TV show *Rock Star: INXS* to find a new singer. The winner was a Canadian former Elvis Presley impersonator JD Fortune.

"The idea worked," insists Garry "Gary" Beers. "We didn't care about TV ratings, we just wanted a good singer. We played to 20,000-seater venues with JD and had a good effort at making a record with him." Released in 2005, *Switch* is something of a lost gem and went platinum in the US – "one of the best records we ever made," raves Tim Farriss. "I'm so fucking proud of *Switch* and we had a couple of cracking shows in London with JD."



After the album's release, JD spent the next six years either playing shows with INXS or saying he'd just been sacked. "JD has issues but, as a band, we carried that," says a diplomatic Tim. "We gave JD enough space to be himself. It felt not dissimilar to Michael – the problem with really talented lead singers is that they don't come without baggage."

JD was replaced in 2011 for INXS' final shows by Irish singer Ciaran Gribben, who Garry calls "really fun".

To promote ***Full Moon, Dirty Hearts*****, INXS adopted a back-to-basics approach playing low-key live venues**

© Enrique Badelescu

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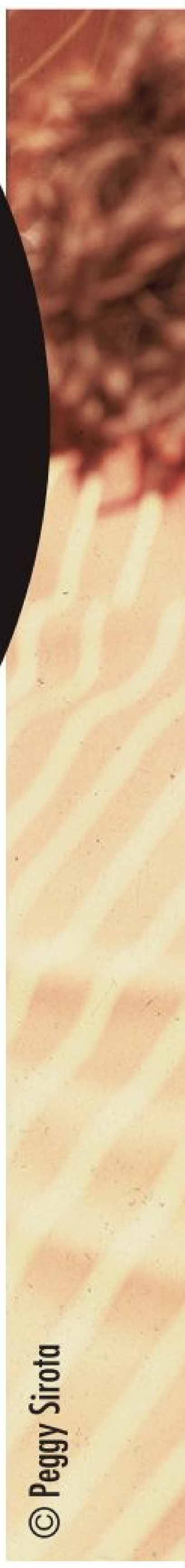
> We had a band meeting where Michael lost the plot a little. He was going 'I don't want to do a f*cking reggae album!'
>
> **CHRIS MURPHY**



© Peggy Sirota

a big deal – we weren't playing Wembley for the money." Garry explains: "We knew Wembley was going to be special, so filming was something we felt that we had to do. Not many bands get to the point where they can have a film like that, one which they can show their families for the rest of their lives. In hindsight, I'd like that Wembley money now! But filming that show was the right decision to make."

INXS didn't tour 1992's *Welcome To Wherever You Are*, yet it's the band's favourite album. "We wanted to be The Beatles for a while, and *Welcome*... was our *Sgt Pepper*," summarises Garry. "The world may have moved on, with grunge taking over, but we were still doing our thing and loving it."

TIME TO TAKE RISKS

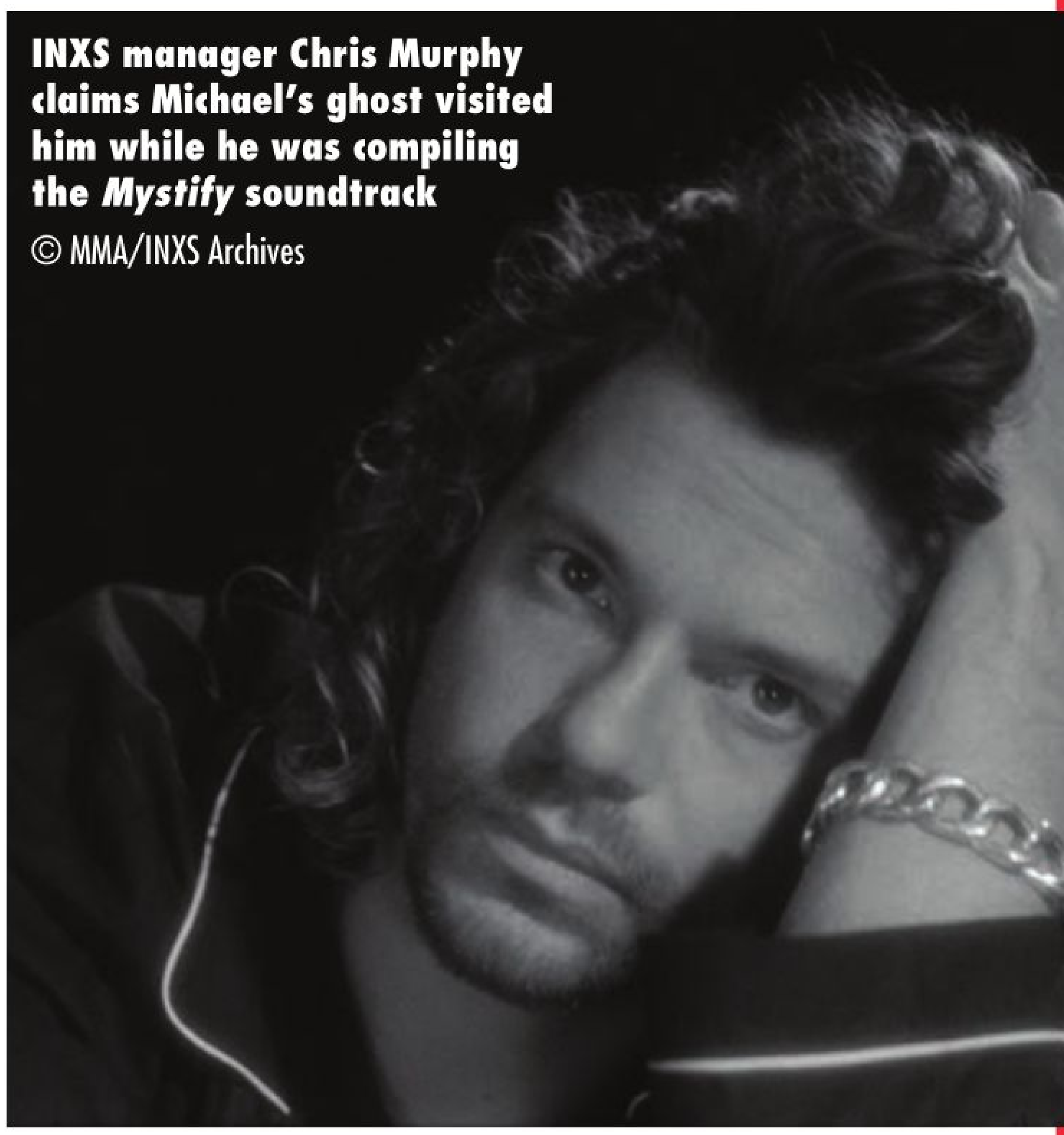
1993's *Full Moon, Dirty Hearts* marked the beginning of the fallout from Michael's injuries sustained in Copenhagen. Upset at the change in Michael's attitude, Chris Murphy resigned as manager. "It became hard with Michael towards the end," he says, sadly. "We'd always been on the same page of taking creative risks but towards the end, we were completely at odds with each other. After *Welcome To Wherever You Are*, INXS needed a risky 'Who cares?' attitude. I told them, 'Look, your sales are dropping. I don't know how many more Wembley Stadiums there'll be. You started out quirky, so disappear for six months, get your vibe, hang out. Then go in the studio and make a reggae album.'"

Chris' rationale was that since INXS had been overtaken by bands copying them, they needed to return to their ska roots in order to win the critics back. It didn't go down well. "We had a band meeting where Michael lost the plot a little," Chris recalls. "He was going, 'I don't want to do a fucking reggae album!', but what Michael wanted to make was a grunge record. Grunge was already gone by then and INXS had to be edgy again. I had to point out Pearl Jam and Nirvana were already edgy – and they weren't being paid $1million, working out which red wine to drink in the studio."

Garry defends the album but admits recording it was a nightmare, saying: "It was made in Capri, in a studio owned by the Mafia. Michael wasn't feeling well and it was a frustrating time. Everything that could go wrong went wrong."

Having played Wembley Stadium three years earlier, the tour for *Full Moon, Dirty Hearts* saw INXS play clubs to get their hunger back. It worked artistically – INXS were magnificent at Brixton Academy in October 1994 – but the press mocked them for, as they saw it, a dramatic slump in popularity. "That was instructional," notes Garry. "The press were ready to not like us anymore and it was, 'Ha! They've gone from Wembley Stadium to a club in Detroit!' The knives were out and we walked into them. But those club dates were great, as it took us back to what we really love doing."

INXS' final album with Michael was *Elegantly Wasted* in 1997. Producer Bruce Fairbairn's methods, insisting the band



INXS manager Chris Murphy claims Michael's ghost visited him while he was compiling the *Mystify* soundtrack
© MMA/INXS Archives

record their parts separately, didn't exactly help foster any return to togetherness. "I don't listen to *Elegantly Wasted* much," admits the usually buoyant Garry. "It's hard to separate how little fun it was to make from the actual record."

A GHOSTLY PRESENCE

It's not just Garry who still feels Michael Hutchence's presence. Chris Murphy returned to managing INXS in 2008 and has overseen the fascinating soundtrack album to accompany *Mystify*. Adamant he didn't want "yet another singles compilation", he and associate Mark Edwards have compiled a bewitching musical biography of INXS' singer, drawn largely from unreleased music.

"Mark called me at 3am one night," says Chris. "He said, 'There's ghosts everywhere! They're flying around the fucking studio!' Later, Mark told me that when he got stuck on the record, he'd get on his hands and knees on the floor of the studio and pray to God and Michael, saying, 'They give me the right direction.'"

Chris was understandably dubious, but later his own wife Carolyn also saw Michael's ghost in their home while her husband was collating the soundtrack. "I was playing the soundtrack over and over, making sure it was as good as I thought it was, when my wife said 'Darling, you know Michael is here with me in the room? He's sitting over there in the chair. It's a beautiful thing, because he left this earth in terrible, lonely circumstances and here he is, listening to his music again.' That's when I thought this project was going to do me in. But then I realised, maybe Michael is with us on this one. Maybe we've released him from the terrible hole he's been in for 22 years."

INXS last played together without Michael in 2012. Legal reasons mean Tim can't talk about a boating accident in 2015, which resulted in him severing a finger, but Garry says: "If Tim wasn't injured, I'm sure INXS would still play together in some form. And I've no doubt if Michael had lived, he'd still be with INXS. Maybe not playing all the time, but we'd be doing shows, making records and disappearing again. Michael was always working with cutting-edge people and he wouldn't want to be part of a hoary old band. If he was still around, Michael would be doing quality music – and he'd be having fun with it."

Among the lingering sadness of his passing, *Mystify* shows how much fun Michael had. *Live Baby Live* is a perfect reminder of how there was nobody better at making stadiums intimate. After 22 years, it's time to remember how much of a kick INXS were all over again. ■

● ***Mystify* is out now on DVD and Blu-ray. Its soundtrack is available via Petrol Records/UMG.**

Welcome to wherever you are now

Since INXS' final shows in 2012, guitarist Tim Farriss has been recovering from a 2015 boating accident, while bassist Garry "Gary" Beers plays in new band Ashenmoon. "It's really exciting," says Garry. "It's AC/DC and Led Zeppelin meets Jeff Buckley and Radiohead. We're putting the finishing touches to our first record."

Keyboardist and Michael Hutchence's main co-writer, keyboardist Andrew Farriss, became a producer and plans to release his debut solo album next year. His first single, the country-tinged *Come Midnight*, was released in August.

The youngest Farriss brother, drummer Jon, launched his own record label, Drum Opera. Its most notable being in 2015, when he released the single *Smokin Joe* by West Indies cricket legend Viv Richards. The drummer told the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "We hit it off straight away and it was easy to see his love of music."

Saxophonist Kirk Pengilly was runner-up (to swimmer Eamon Sullivan) in the Australian version of *Celebrity Masterchef* and now runs online health store InnerOrigin with his wife Layne.

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